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ABSTRACT

This document provides indepth study and support of the "Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000" (CLB 2000). In order to make the CLB 2000 usable, the competencies and standards were considerably compressed and simplified, and much of the indepth discussion of language ability or proficiency was omitted, at publication. This document includes: (1) "Theoretical Bases of the CLB 2000: Definitions and Models" (communicative proficiency, contents of each component of communicative proficiency, and selection of CLB competencies and structure of a benchmark); (2) "Philosophical Bases of the CLB 2000: Views, Principles, Theory, and Research" (language and language use; adult second language learning; the role of grammar, pronunciation, and fluency in defining a benchmark; the relationship between language development and the progression of the benchmarks; and the CLB as a framework for developing curricula and assessment tools); and (3) "The CLB Rating Scales: Principles of Assessment and Evaluation in the CLB" (evaluating speaking and writing performance, evaluating listening and reading performance, and an example using the CLB scales to score a writing task). A glossary of terms is included. Three appendixes contain overview of speaking, listening, reading, and writing benchmarks. (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education) (Contains 171 references.) (SM)

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Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework

Grazyna Pawlikowska - Smith | March 2002

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PREFACE

The Board of Directors and staff of the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) are pleased to release *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework*, a companion document to *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: English as a second language for adults (CLB 2000).*

The document before you is intended as a more in-depth study and support of the *CLB 2000*. In order to make the *CLB 2000* a practical, usable document, the competencies and the standards had to be considerably compressed and simplified, and much of the in-depth discussion of language ability, or proficiency, was omitted at the time of the document's publication in September 2000. In particular, the overview of the CLB global profiles of Benchmarks 1-12, theoretical background, the rating scales, glossary of terms, and bibliography were omitted and are presented in *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000: Theoretical Framework* instead. Even with the expanded information and discussion included in it, however, the present document has only been able to touch on the complex and diverse ways in which adults learn to communicate in a second language.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Grazyna Pawlikowska-Smith, the author of this companion document to *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*, for her contributions to the CLB national standards.

We invite you to visit the CCLB website (www.language.ca) on a regular basis, to learn more about CCLB initiatives and related activities.

Board of Directors and Staff
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Chapter 1

Theoretical bases of the CLB 2000: Definitions and models

This chapter provides the user of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 with additional information about the concepts, definitions, and the theoretical foundation behind the framework. It summarizes views on the following topics: communicative proficiency, its five components, its theoretical model, content specification for each component, and the discussion of CLB competencies.

1. 1. Communicative proficiency

The Canadian Language Benchmarks is based on a functional view of language, language use and language proficiency. Such a view relates language to the contexts in which it is used and the communicative functions it performs. The focus of the Canadian Language Benchmarks is thus on communication and communicative proficiency in English as a second language.

Communicative proficiency is not an abstract concept of "absolute" language ability. Rather, it depends on situations of language use. It is described as adequate control over language skills for a specified purpose (e.g., for studying, performing a job, functioning independently in a community, negotiating a business deal). Depending on what communication tasks will be required, certain components may be given priority in a description of communicative proficiency, and others may not be included at all.

Communicative proficiency is language use, or performance. It is the ability to communicate: to interact, to express, to interpret and to negotiate meaning, and to create discourse in a variety of social contexts and situations.

Communicative proficiency, sometimes called communicative language ability, has also been described as:

- the ability to use the English language to accomplish communication tasks,
- the degree of skill in language performance measured on a continuum of language ability defined in relation to the situations in which the learner will use the language (but without a necessary reference to a curriculum) (Oxford, 1990, p. 237),
- knowledge of various aspects of language (what to say and how to say it, to whom, in what circumstances, and for what purpose, combined with the strategic procedures and skills of how to use it),
- the ability to use language in real communicative situations.

1.1.2 Five components of communicative proficiency

The CLB concept of communicative proficiency is based on models which have five distinct components. (See discussion below.) The five components can be described as follows:

1) **Linguistic competence** is the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary at a sentence level. It enables the building and recognition of well-formed, grammatically accurate utterances, according to the rules of syntax, semantics, morphology, and phonology/graphology.

2) **Textual competence** is the knowledge and application of cohesion and coherence rules and devices in building larger texts/discourse. It enables the connection of utterances and sentences into cohesive, logical and functionally coherent texts and/or discourse.

3) **Functional competence** is competence to convey and interpret communicative intent (or function) behind a sentence, utterance or text. It encompasses macro-functions of language use (e.g., transmission of information, social interaction and getting things done/persuading others, learning and thinking, creation and enjoyment) and micro-functions, or speech acts (e.g., requests, threats, warnings, pleas, etc.), and the conventions of use.

4) **Socio-cultural competence** focuses on appropriateness in producing and understanding utterances. These include rules of politeness; sensitivity to register, dialect or variety; norms of stylistic appropriateness; sensitivity to "naturalness"; knowledge of idioms and figurative language; knowledge of culture, custom and institutions; knowledge of cultural references; and uses of language through interactional skills to establish and maintain social relationships.

5) **Strategic competence** manages the integration and application of all the other language competence components to the specific context and situation of language use. It involves planning and assessing communication, avoiding potential or repairing actual difficulties in communication, coping with communication breakdown, and using affective devices. Most of all, its function is to ensure effectiveness of communication "transactions".

Language tasks in real life as well as in the classroom contain elements of all the five components of communicative proficiency. Teachers, assessors and others are looking at learners':

- linguistic competence - when they evaluate the grammatical accuracy of speech or writing

- textual competence - when they evaluate the way utterances or sentences are connected with each other into a logical text and discourse, and how information is organized and presented in the text

- functional competence - when they evaluate the skill of conveying and understanding communicative intent; in the matching of the function with the grammatical form or in the appropriate use of genre and rhetorical patterns in speech or writing

- socio-cultural competence - when they evaluate the social appropriateness of speech or writing

- strategic competence - when they evaluate attitude, approach to communication, effectiveness and fluency

1.1.3 Model of communicative proficiency

The CLB model of communicative proficiency is an adaptation and synthesis, or "fusion," of the following: model of communicative language ability by Bachman (1990), the model by Bachman and Palmer (1996), and a pedagogical model of communicative competence by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell (1995). All the models are updated versions of the classic Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) models of communicative competence, and all owe much to Hymes (1971) and his concept of communicative competence.

The model of communicative language ability by Bachman (1990), extended by Bachman and Palmer (1996), additionally differs from the other models in the treatment and interpretation of the strategic competence component. Strategic competence is the goal-setting, assessment and planning force in all language use, not only in repairing communication problems and breakdowns, as it is the case in the other models.

Two main parts of communicative language ability

Language Competence	Strategic competence
• Organizational competence: linguistic and textual • Pragmatic competence: functional and socio-cultural	Set of metacognitive strategies; serves as cognitive management and executive function in language use (Bachman, 1996, p. 70)

The model suggests that strategic competence may extend beyond purely linguistic considerations. In goal setting, assessment and planning communication functions, strategic competence may activate non-linguistic knowledge and other cognitive functions. (In most cases, such strategies are not considered demonstrable outcomes suitable for assessment, even if they are considered very important in second language learning and instruction.)

Language competence in the model is further broken down into organizational competence (linguistic competence and textual competence components) and pragmatic competence (functional and socio-cultural components).

The following diagram, adapted from Bachman (1990, p. 87). is a fuller visual metaphor of language competence (organizational and pragmatic language knowledge, without strategic competence).

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCE	**PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE**
LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE • grammar rules at sentence level: syntax semantics lexicon morphology phonology/ graphology	FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCE • interpreting and expressing intentions through utterances: micro-functions and speech acts • macro-functions: ideational manipulative heuristic imaginative • conventions of language use in a society / culture
TEXTUAL COMPETENCE • rules for longer text and discourse level: cohesion coherence rhetorical organization conversational structures	SOCIO-CULTURAL COMPETENCE • knowledge of: social contexts (participants, situations) rules of appropriateness rules of politeness cultural knowledge/references language variation non-verbal communication figurative language and idiom

Strategic competence in Bachman's model activates interaction between the above components in the performance of communication tasks.

1.2 Contents of each component of communicative proficiency: detailed discussion

1.2.1 Linguistic competence

Linguistic competence consists of the systematic elements of language traditionally described by various grammars of English. It is the knowledge of the formal code of language on how to combine the elements of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation to produce well-formed sentences.

Suggested contents of linguistic competence

Adapted from Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995, p. 18.

Syntax

1. Constituent/phrase structure
2. Word order (canonical and marked)
3. Sentence types (e.g., statements, negatives, questions, imperatives, exclamations)
4. Special constructions (e.g., there +BE; What+sub.+verb+BE; question tags)
5. Modifiers, intensifiers (e.g., quantifiers, comparing and equating)
6. Coordination (e.g., and, or, etc.) and correlation (e.g., both X and Y; either X or Y)
7. Subordination (e.g., adverbial clauses, conditionals)
8. Embedding (e.g., noun clauses, relative clauses, reported speech)

Morphology

Parts of speech, inflections (e.g., agreement and concord), productive derivational processes (e.g., compounding, affixation, conversion/incorporation)

Lexicon (receptive and productive)

- Words (e.g., content words -nouns, verbs, adjectives, and function words- pronouns, prepositions, verbal auxiliaries, etc.)
- Routines (e.g., word-like fixed phrases such as, "of course", "all of a sudden"; formulaic and semi-formulaic chunks such as "How do you do?")
- Collocations (e.g., Verb-Object such as "spend money"; Adverb-Adjective such as "mutually intelligible"; Adjective-Noun such as "tall building")
- Idioms (e.g., "kick the bucket")

Phonology (for pronunciation)

- Segmentals (e.g., vowels, consonants, consonant clusters, syllable types)
- Suprasegmentals (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm)

Orthography (for spelling)

- Letters (if writing system is alphabetic)
- Phoneme-grapheme correspondences
- Rules of spelling
- Conventions of mechanics and punctuation

1.2.2 Textual competence

For Bachman and Palmer "textual knowledge is involved in producing or comprehending texts, which are units of language - spoken or written - that consist of two or more utterances or sentences. There are two areas of textual knowledge: knowledge of cohesion and knowledge of rhetorical or conversational organization." (1996, p. 68). Celce-Murcia et al. use the term "discourse competence" for Bachman and Palmer 's "textual competence". According to them, it involves "the selection, sequencing, and arrangement of words, structures, sentences and utterances to achieve a unified spoken or written text." (*Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995, p .13)* Textual (or discourse) competence is usually described as composed of cohesion, deixis, coherence, genre structure, and conversational structures.

Cohesion is surface connectedness between clauses (and their parts) achieved by formal textual links (cohesive devices). Cohesion rules dictate how sentences/clauses in a piece of text may be "stitched together," or externally and internally connected with each other. **Deixis**, a Greek word for pointing or indicating, organizes the features of language which are relative to the time and place of the utterance (he, here, before, etc.). **Coherence** regulates the "top-down organisation of propositions" in a text, according to its purpose and intent (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995, p. 15). Formal links (cohesive devices) are not enough to make a stretch of language into coherent discourse. It is possible for a text to have cohesion but not coherence. Such text has surface connectedness; it is neatly linked within and between sentences but may still appear "illogical" or "lacking coherence" to the listener or reader in a particular context: unclear as to its purpose and intended meaning.

Coherence seems to be the most difficult to describe of all components of discourse competence but it is central to our understanding of it; our interpretation of the meaning of discourse rests on our perception of its coherence (Gumperz 1982, p. 204). Celce-Murcia et al. describe coherence like this:

> Coherence is concerned with macrostructure, that is, its major focus is the expression of content and purpose *in top-down organization of propositions.* It is concerned with what is thematic (i.e., what the point of departure of a speaker/writer's message is). The speaker (and even more so the writer) must use linguistic signals that make discourse cohere, which means not only using cohesive devices such as reference markers and lexical or semantic repetition or entailment but also a sequencing or ordering of propositional structures which takes into account social relationships, shared knowledge, and genre, and which generally follows certain preferred organizational patterns: temporal/chronological ordering, spatial organization, cause-effect, condition-result, etc. (…) For listeners and readers coherence relates to ease of interpretation as they use their linguistic knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge, and situational clues to relate a piece of discourse to objects and events

(real or imagined) beyond the text itself. As Grice (1975) has pointed out, discourse is assumed to be coherent unless it is impossible to infer a function and generate a possible interpretation. (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995, p. 15; italics original)

Suggested contents of textual competence

Adapted from Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei,, & Thurrell, 1995, p.14., Table 1 (Discourse Competence). Changes and additional examples, which are not in the quoted article are in italics

Cohesion

- Reference in the text (anaphora, cataphora)
- Substitution/ellipsis
- Conjunctions (and, but, however)
- Parallel structures (*I like cooking and eating; " to love and to hold, for richer and for poorer"...)*
- Lexical chains related to content schemata; *words connected to each other by association within a "semantic field," (e.g., mother, child, newborn, infant, baby, birth, delivery, nursing, bottle, breasts)*

Deixis

- Personal *reference: (pronouns referring to the persons involved or talked about (I, you, he; as in: "I'm telling you that he...")*
- Spatial *reference (adverbials of place: this, that, here, there, as in: "I'm telling you that he was here.")*
- Temporal *reference (adverbials of time: now, then, before after; as in: "I'm telling you that he was here an hour ago.")*
- Textual *reference (in the following picture/table...in the graph on the previous page... as I mentioned in the first example; or as in: "As I've already said, he was here an hour ago.")*

Coherence

- Organized expression and interpretation of content and purpose (content schemata)
- Thematization and staging (theme-rheme development)
- Management of old and new information
- Prepositional structures and their organizational sequences
- temporal, spatial, cause-effect, condition-result, etc.
- Temporal continuity/shift (sequence of tenses)

Genre/Generic Structure (formal schemata)
narrative, interview, service encounter, research report, sermon, etc.)

Conversational Structure

- How to perform openings and reopenings
- Topic establishment and change
- How to hold and relinquish the floor
- How to interrupt

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- How to collaborate and backchannel
- How to do preclosings and closings
- Adjacency pairs (related to *functional* competence)
- Knowing preferred and dispreferred (i.e. not preferred) responses (e.g., invitation: accept or decline)

1.2.3 Functional competence

Functional competence is the knowledge and ability to understand what the real intent of the speaker or written text is, beyond the literal meaning of words. It is what Bachman (1990) calls "illocutionary competence." It is what "enables us to interpret relationships between utterances or sentences and texts and the intentions of language users." (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 69)

In the first communicative competence models (Canale, 1983; Canale and Swain, 1980) and, subsequently, in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks, Working Document, 1996*, functional competence was not isolated as a separate component. The ability to integrate form and function was subsumed under the sociolinguistic competence component. As a result, the models did not provide enough emphasis to reflect what was really happening in communicative language teaching (CLB): the pedagogical importance of language functions and speech acts in functional syllabi in the last twenty some years. The present model used by Canadian Language Benchmarks addresses functional competence as a separate component, following Bachman (1990) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995).

Function can be described as "purpose," "intended outcome," or "use." Purposes or use for language are multiple, for example: establishing interpersonal relationships, getting things done, controlling others' behaviour, exchanging information, learning, thinking, teaching, problem-solving, memorizing, enjoying literature, self-expression, affecting the world. A communication act, utterance or text can have more than one function, and there is no one perfect classification system that can fit every analysis and every case.

The Canadian Language Benchmarks is based on the taxonomy of macro-functions by Bachman (1990, pp. 92-94). He classifies functions as follows:

- **Ideational function:**

used to present, describe and share our experience of reality (knowledge and feelings). (This function has also been called referential, descriptive, cognitive, or even communicative by other authors.)

- **Manipulative functions:**

-Instrumental: used to get things done (by ourselves or others)
-Regulatory: used to control others' behaviour, and to formulate and state laws and rules
-Interpersonal (interactional): used to form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships (phatic language use)

- **Heuristic function:**

used to extend our knowledge; to learn; to teach; to solve problems (e.g., plan, organize, compose and revise an essay); to memorize facts, words, formulas and rules; to learn a language; to teach a language (e.g., demonstrate the meaning of "This is a book.")

- **Imaginative function:**

used to derive enjoyment from the artistic or humorous aspects of language: e.g., jokes, metaphors, poems, dramas and stories.

The relationship between the CLB and the functions

The four competency areas in each Benchmark are derived from the macro-functions of language use. The tables below illustrate the relationship between the speaking and reading competency areas and the functions: in real life the competencies fulfil several or all the functions at once.

Speaking Benchmarks Competencies

Use/Function	Goal	Examples of texts	CLB related Competencies

Manipulative: Instrumental, directive	To affect the world; to get things done	*Tell me your name.* *Turn left at the first lights, then follow the signs.*	**Giving and following instructions** Instructions, directions
Manipulative: Instrumental, directive	To affect the world; to get things done	*Would you please do this for me? I promise.*	**Getting things done (suasion)** Promise, pledge, warn, suggest, offer, advise, request, persuade
Manipulative: Interpersonal & Regulatory	To form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships; social cohesion and "phatic communion"; to control others' behaviour	*How are you doing? Good to see you. Please give my regards to your wife. Please be seated. Could you repeat that last point?*	**Social interaction** Greetings, small talk, thanks, congratulations, apologies, welcomes,etc. Conversation management competencies
Ideational	To exchange/communicate propositional information about knowledge or feelings; to express meaning	*There are grizzlies in the Rocky Mountains. It is raining in Victoria. I feel stressed out.*	**Information** Stating, describing, identifying, classifying, narrating/relating, concluding, explaining, claiming, etc.
Heuristic	To learn, think, problem-solve, memorize; cognitive processing of declarative and procedural knowledge	Self-monitoring of accuracy of speech, grouping/classifying of items (including vocabulary items), formulating hypotheses, discovering rules.	**Processes and strategies; micro-skills** Strategies for language learning; memorizing words; process of composing text; listening for details; monitoring communication; summarizing; pronunciation.
Imaginative (creative)	To create or use stories, poetry, metaphors, jokes, plays	*My love is like a red red rose…Row, row, row your boat….*	**Processes and strategies; micro – skills** Strategies for language learning: chanting, reciting, singing, acting, games, etc.

Reading Benchmarks competencies

Use/Function	Goal	Examples of tasks and texts	CLB related competencies

Manipulative: Instrumental, directive	To read information to get things done and to learn what others want us to know or do	*Manuals, directions, recipes, formulas, procedures*	**Reading instructions and instructional texts** Following instructions, and instructional texts.
Manipulative: Instrumental & Regulatory	To read information to learn what others want us to know or do	*Cover letter, offer, proposal, traffic ticket, coupon*	**Reading business / service texts** (• formatted • unformatted) Comprehending and acting on formal or semi-formal: letters, notices, memos, messages with reminders, warnings, and promises.
Manipulative: Interpersonal (Interactional)	To read texts that form, maintain or change interpersonal relationships; to read for connectedness and social cohesion	*Greeting cards, invitations, personal notes or letters, newsletters, e-mail messages*	**Reading social interaction texts** Comprehending the intent of and acting on social letters, e-mails, notes and greeting cards.
Ideational	To read to obtain information, data, knowledge, ideas, skills, understanding, facts, writer's opinions; to read for content	*Newspapers, editorials, books, reports, textbooks, catalogues, tables, calendars, schedules, graphs, stats*	**Reading informational text** (• formatted • unformatted) Demonstrating comprehension of the literal and implied meaning of various texts that state, describe, list, compare, identify.
Heuristic	To read to learn content through text; problem-solve, memorize; reading as a learning tool	*Dictionaries, encyclopaedias, cross-word puzzles*	**Processes and strategies; micro-skills** Demonstrating reading process competencies / strategies to comprehend written text
Imaginative (creative)	To read for enjoyment of language, literature, and the act of reading	*Stories, poetry, puzzles, captions, plays*	**Processes and strategies; micro-skills** Demonstrating strategies for language learning

As shown in the two diagrams above, and the following summary diagram, the CLB competencies of social interaction, instructions and suasion (getting things done) belong in the manipulative macro-function, whereas the information competencies (expressing information, knowledge, opinions) belong in the ideational macro-function. The heuristic and imaginative macro-functions (non-communicative language uses) house the competencies which belong outside the strict "communicative" range: the strategies and activities such as learning, practising, rehearsing, memorizing, processing, playing, and enjoying, which help in the acquisition of the more communicative ones.

MACRO-FUNCTIONS	FUNCTIONS/ USES	DOMINANT SKILLS	BENCHMARK COMPETENCIES
MANIPULATIVE	Interpersonal	Interactional skills	"Social Interaction"
	Directive	Transactional skills	"Instructions" "Suasion"
IDEATIONAL	Referential/ expressing and exchanging facts, ideas, feelings		"Information"
HEURISTIC	Learning/thinking/ problem solving	Thinking skills Learning skills	No Benchmark standards (learning process)
CREATIVE	Creating / enjoying	Creativity	No Benchmark standards (learning process)

Suggested contents of functional competence

Adapted from Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 77; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell ,1995, p. 22, and van Ek 1976, pp. 37-39.

Knowledge of language functions
Macro-functions: Ideational, Manipulative, Heuristic, and Imaginative
Micro-functions:
Interpersonal Exchange

- Greeting and leave-taking
- Making introductions, identifying oneself, attracting attention, inquiring about others
- Extending, accepting and declining invitations and offers
- Making and breaking arrangements and engagements
- Welcoming, expressing solidarity, sharing, saving face, compromising
- Expressing and acknowledging gratitude and appreciation
- Complimenting, congratulating and toasting
- Reacting to the interlocutor's speech
- Showing attention, interest, surprise, sympathy, happiness, disbelief, disappointment, indifference, regret, etc.

Information

Facts

- Asking for and giving factual information
- Identifying, classifying
- Reporting (describing and narrating)
- Remembering
- Explaining, correcting and discussing
- Expressing and inquiring about causal and logical relationships between facts, phenomena, events; analysing, synthesizing, evaluating factual information; expressing or inquiring about findings and conclusions

Opinions

- Expressing and finding out about opinions and attitudes
- Expressing agreement and disagreement
- Expressing approval and disapproval
- Expressing satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Feelings/Emotional Attitudes

- Expressing and finding out about feelings and emotional attitudes (likes, dislikes, preference, wants, wishes, desires, happiness, sadness, love, fear, anger, worry, interest, lack of interest, pleasure, anxiety, pain, relief, surprise, annoyance, etc.)

Problems/Moral Attitudes

- Complaining, criticizing, blaming, accusing, admitting, denying, regretting, apologizing, forgiving

Future Scenarios

- Expressing and inquiring about plans, goals, and intentions
- Promising
- Predicting and speculating

- Discussing possibilities and capabilities of doing something

Suasion

- Suggesting, requesting and instructing
- Giving orders, directing, advising and warning
- Expressing and inquiring about rights, duties and obligations
- Persuading, encouraging/inviting others to do something, and discouraging
- Asking for, granting and withholding/denying permission
- Offering and requesting assistance; accepting or rejecting assistance

Knowledge of Speech Act Sets

Knowledge of obligatory and optional elements in conventional exchanges. Example: an "apology speech act" has the following elements:

1. Express apology,
2. Express responsibility (obligatory),
3. Offer an explanation,
4. Offer repair,
5. Promise improvement (optional).

1.2.4 Socio-cultural competence

Socio-cultural competence in the present model is only one part of the "sociolinguistic competence" of the Canale and Swain model (1980). The model adopted by the CLB 2000 has divided "sociolinguistic competence" into two separate components: functional competence (understanding of language functions and speech acts, also called "actional" competence by Celce-Murcia et al., 1995) and socio-cultural competence (Celce-Murcia et al., 1995).

Socio-cultural competence is about decisions and judgements of appropriateness[1] at all levels of communication because socio-cultural conventions affect all levels of speech production and interpretation, including manner, intonation, tone of voice, facial expression, and lexical choices. Features of a specific context, including the participants, their roles, topic, and purpose determine our choices based on socio-cultural conventions of use. Adapting language to "audience" and "topic," sensitivity to dialect, sensitivity to register (distance and formality), naturalness, and ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech are all part of socio-cultural competence, according to Bachman (1990). **Sensitivity to dialect or variety** is recognizing differences and conventions in language use in different regions or by different social groups in various social contexts. **Sensitivity to register** includes discourse in a specific subject matter (specialist or technical "domain" (e.g., the language of law); awareness of the differences between spoken and written mode of discourse; and use of style (e.g., frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate.) (Joos, 1967). **Sensitivity to naturalness** (what Pawley and Syder,1983, call "native -like way") means phrasing that sounds natural, and not strange, "foreign," archaic or bookish.

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[1] Hymes, in his seminal 1971 paper, defines appropriateness as more than 'acceptability' in 'performance'. He relates appropriateness to some defining context and the tacit knowledge that underlies the judgement of it by language users. (Hymes, 1971, p. 286)

Other components of socio-cultural competence are non-verbal signals (which are culturally specific and as deeply internalized as verbal language), politeness strategies (hedges, modals), background knowledge about the society and culture (e.g., schemata of Canadian history, geography, culture, customs, systems, organizations and institutions, behavioural verbal and non-verbal scripts relating to what people do, where, how and why). **Politeness** norms are an important part of socio-cultural competence. The theory of politeness of Brown and Levinson (1987) is based on the assumption that protection of face, a person's public self-image, is the motivation for the use of politeness strategies (e.g., face threatening and face-saving acts) and 'hedges', additional cautionary notes from the speaker or writer to inform the listener or reader how to interpret the utterance.

A large part of the ability to interpret discourse occurs through complex socio-cultural schemata and "scripts" of events or "scenarios". Having such schemata and scripts triggers expectations regarding the social roles of participants or characters, relationships, possible course for the development of the conversation or narration, possible turn of events, and so on. They all aid in processing or producing discourse and evaluating its socio-cultural appropriateness.

Suggested contents of socio-cultural competence

Adapted from Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995, p.24.

Social Contextual Factors

- Participant variables (age, gender, office and status, social distance, power and affective relations, sensitivity to social variation in language)
- Situation (time, place, purpose of transaction, social function)

Stylistic Appropriateness

- Politeness conventions
- Sensitivity to register/style: functional stylistic variation (spoken or written), degrees of formality/registers, field-specific registers, sensitivity to naturalness

Cultural Factors

- Knowledge of cultural references, literature and the arts, children's literature, pop culture, mass-media culture, significant socio-cultural events
- Knowledge of figures of speech and idiom, and expressions such as "oops," "dah," etc.
- Knowledge of social and institutional structures, history, geography, sensitivity to dialects (regional variation)

- Knowledge of social conventions, ceremonies and rituals, major values, beliefs, norms and taboos
- Cross-cultural/multiculturalism awareness and strategies

Non-Verbal communication

- Body language (e.g., eye contact, gesture, posture, facial expression, non-verbal turn-taking signals)
- Non-verbal vocalisations (e.g.,um, aha)
- Personal-interpersonal space (e.g., proxemics)
- Touching conventions (e.g., haptics)
- Paralinguistic factors (e.g., acoustical sounds, non-vocal sounds; culturally and socially variable voice volume, pitch and rate of speech)

Pedagogy of socio-cultural competence

One approach to the pedagogy of socio-cultural competence suggested by C. Kramsch (1993) is teaching language as context, i.e., making learners see the impact of contextual variables (setting, participants, purpose, tone, etc.) on interaction and the language of discourse. Kramsch also stresses her conviction that teaching socio-cultural competence cannot be done directly by just talking about it or teaching lists of "useful phrases". "Pragmatic knowledge can only be acquired through observation and analysis and a feel for the whole social context. It requires, therefore, a totally different pedagogic approach." (Kramsch, 1993, p. 92).

1.2.5 Strategic competence

Strategic competence is perhaps understood even less well than functional and sociolinguistic components of communicative language ability, or proficiency. In the research literature, it is viewed from several different perspectives of language use. The varying perspectives provide different frameworks for its conceptualization, which can be summarized metaphorically as follows:

- Strategic competence as general manager,
- Strategic competence as "how to" knowledge,
- Strategic competence as "on-line" information processing,
- Strategic competence as a "communication problem fixer",
- Strategic competence as ways to learn.

What is a strategy? Definitions

Strategic competence is central to language performance and to language learning, but it is neither easy to describe, nor possible to assess. It may also involve general cognitive, non-linguistic procedures. In everyday discourse, strategy means a plan, step, or a set of plans for the best way to achieve an objective, to achieve success or to gain advantage. Alternative terms that have been used for strategies are:

techniques, conscious plans or operations, learning or functional skills, cognitive abilities, problem-solving procedures, cognitive processes. (Oxford, 1990, p. 238)

Faerch and Kasper (1980) and Ellis (1985), make the following distinction between a strategy and a process:

- strategy – single operation or plan for controlling the sequence of operations,
- process – operations involved in the development or realization of the plan, sequence of operations, e.g., the production / reception process

Strategic competence in Bachman's model of communicative proficiency (1990) involves much more than repair or "compensatory" strategies used to overcome communication difficulties; it "manages" the integration of all the other components of language use. Strategic competence is the cognitive capacity overseeing language use and responsible for goal setting, assessment and planning of communication tasks, including the accomplishment of those tasks in the face of communication difficulties. Strategic competence activates the use of the language knowledge components: grammatical, textual (discourse), functional, and socio-cultural. Various groups of strategies, related to a number of underlying cognitive processes, facilitate real-time processing in production and comprehension helping to solve immediate communication problems, and assisting in developing the underlying "interlanguage system."

Conscious or subconscious?

Despite the "planning" element in the strategies, not all strategies in thinking, language processing and discourse construction are "conscious." In fact, most strategies are typically activated subconsciously, for various reasons: they either have become automatic or they operate under such on-line processing pressure that they are not readily accessible to the learner's conscious attention and monitoring. Some strategies, however, are always conscious (for example, formal practice strategies), and others can be taught, developed and mastered.

Strategies involved in second language learning and communication

Only some strategies are "behavioural" (e.g., externally observable and often predictable in the context of a discourse) and only such strategies are included in the benchmark "competency" assessment (e.g., social interaction and conversation management strategies). Strategies, which cannot be assessed in the same way, are considered to be paths to better language learning, comprehension, and construction of discourse through underlying processes and operations. These are in the domain of second language teaching and learning, under heuristic (learning and thinking) language use and imaginative (creative) language use.

Because strategies are not formally evaluated as part of achieving competencies for a benchmark (except where behavioural and observable, as in conversation process management), the CLB has no separate rating scale for them. (See CLB rating scales in Chapter 3).

Suggested contents of strategic competence

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Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995, p. 28, Table 5) propose the following content categories for strategic competence in communicative language teaching:

a. Avoidance/reduction strategies

- message replacement
- topic avoidance
- message abandonment

b. Achievement/compensatory strategies

- circumlocution (e.g., 'the thing you open bottles with' for 'corkscrew')
- approximation (e.g., 'fish' for 'carp')
- all-purpose words (e.g., 'thingy,' 'thingamajig')
- non-linguistic means (mime, pointing, gestures, drawing picture)
- restructuring (e.g., 'The bus was very ...there were a lot of people on it')
- word-coinage (e.g., 'airball' for 'balloon')
- literal translation from L1
- foreignizing (e.g., L1 word with L2 pronunciation)
- code switching to L1 or L3
- retrieval (e.g., 'bro...bron...bronze')

c. Stalling or time-gaining strategies

- fillers, hesitation devices and gambits (e.g., 'well,' 'actually'... 'where was I...?')
- self and other-repetition

d. Self-monitoring strategies

- self-initiated repair (e.g., 'I mean')
- self-rephrasing (over-elaboration) (e.g., 'This is for students...pupils...when you're at school')

e. Interactional strategies

- appeals for help: direct (e.g., What do you call...?) or indirect (e.g., I don't know the word in English... or puzzled expression)
- meaning negotiation strategies: indicators of non/misunderstanding (requests for repetition ,e.g., 'Pardon?' 'Could you say that again please?'; clarification requests (e.g., 'What do you mean by...?'); confirmation requests (e.g., 'Did you say...?'); expressions of non-understanding (verbal ,e.g., 'Sorry, I'm not sure I understand…'and non-verbal,e.g., raised eyebrows, blank look); interpretive summary (e.g., 'You mean.' /'So what you're saying is...?'); responses (repetition, rephrasing, expansion, reduction, confirmation, rejection, repair); comprehension checks:
  - ➢ whether the interlocutor can follow you (e.g., 'Am I making sense?')
  - ➢ whether what you said was correct or grammatical (e.g., 'Can I/you say that?')
  - ➢ whether the interlocutor is listening (e.g., on the phone: 'Are you still there?')
  - ➢ whether the interlocutor can hear you.

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1.3 The selection of the CLB competencies and the structure of a CLB Benchmark

The CLB competencies

In general, the selection, sampling and description of Canadian Language Benchmarks competencies was based on the following criteria:

- their universal relevance in human communication, as revealed by any general classification of language use. *Social interaction* (interacting in an interpersonal social situation, in speech or writing), *following and giving instructions, suasion* (persuading others, or reacting to suasion to do something, in speech or writing), and *information* (exchanging, presenting and discussing information, ideas, opinions, feelings; telling stories, describing, reporting, arguing, etc., in speech or writing) seem to be universally relevant in human communication.

- their usefulness[2], meeting the communication needs of a broadly identified learner of English as a second language (including recent newcomers) in the integration process.

In other words, the selection of competencies and tasks in the CLB has been guided by how useful and important they are in real communication situations and tasks that a newcomer learner may encounter in the community, in educational contexts, and on the job.

Competency: a general statement of intended outcome of learning.

The CLB competencies are the *directly observable and measurable performance outcomes*, or measurable outcomes of instruction in a curriculum framework. A competency can usually be further broken down into smaller components. Examples of competencies: "can take part in a short casual exchange/small talk"; "can write a note to someone or leave a voice-mail message for a specified purpose".

Competencies and tasks are only samples indicative of the range of a person's language ability at a particular Benchmark level. Many researchers have invoked an iceberg analogy for language performance. The same analogy holds true for the selected four competency areas in each benchmark; there is much more language competence and ability under the surface than can be demonstrated by the learner in the performance of only four tasks in social interaction, instructions, suasion and information. Also, similar competencies (e.g., following instructions and instructional texts) require increasing complexity of performance across the three stages of proficiency because of the progressively demanding tasks, contexts and performance expectations.

The structure of a Benchmark

Each Benchmark contains a global performance descriptor, or a short Benchmark performance profile. This is a brief account of a learner's general language ability in English as a second language, as manifested in speaking, listening, reading or writing tasks at this benchmark level. The aim of the general performance profile is to give additional information and assistance to the teacher in 'placing' and evaluating learners, or in matching competencies and tasks to a benchmark level within the broader CLB continuum.

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[2] Usefulness, as determined by frequency and functionality within topics, situations and tasks that the newcomer learner encounters; see 'utility' criterion principle, Corder, 1973, pp. 317-20.

The core of each Benchmark, however, is the standard statements that describe what the learner should be able to do at each Benchmark. They describe the four selected competencies or "what the person can do" in the areas of social interaction, instructions, suasion, and information, under specific conditions (including situational variables). In situations of a CLB-aligned curriculum, they are "outcomes" after a session of study which the learner should demonstrate to achieve the Benchmark.

The learner's performance is assessed against a mastery criterion (standard of adequate / satisfactory performance). Each Benchmark lists some satisfactory performance indicators of effectiveness and quality of communication that a learner can realistically demonstrate to meet each standard. They are specifications of the mastery level of performance. Again, "mastery" is not to be interpreted as "perfection"; it is defined as "satisfactory" or "adequate" performance.

Finally, each Benchmark also provides examples of types of communication tasks which may help demonstrate the required standard of proficiency. They are suggestions for communication tasks that enable the learner to demonstrate the skills, or "what the learner can do".

The question of background knowledge in achieving Benchmark competencies

Background knowledge depends on a range of previous experiences, including cultural and educational experiences, and not necessarily on the learner's formal knowledge of the language. The lack of background knowledge (e.g., world knowledge; socio-cultural, cultural knowledge; knowledge of the physical or cultural local context, of the local resources, networks, institutions or customs).may disadvantage learners unfamiliar with local references and may hinder the accomplishment of a task, or it may even make it impossible. As a result, the assessment or evaluation of the learner's communicative proficiency (language use in specific contexts and about specific topics), either for the purposes of placement or achievement, may be influenced. The role and treatment of background knowledge in second language education, therefore, should be addressed by curricula, syllabi and classroom procedures in a systematic manner.

Each section overview found in *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* contains an item titled "What may need to be taught or learned to achieve the Benchmark competencies". It lists briefly some of the background knowledge, together with the underlying processes, strategies or micro-skills that are necessary to the development of outcome competencies and to the achievement of the standards.

Chapter 2

Philosophical bases of the CLB 2000: Views, principles, theory and research behind the CLB framework

This chapter provides the user of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 with additional information about the concepts, definitions, and the philosophical foundation behind the CLB framework. It summarizes views on the following topics: language and language use; adult second language learning; the role of grammar, pronunciation and fluency in defining a benchmark standard; the relationship between language development and the progression of the CLB proficiency scale; and the CLB as a framework for developing curricula and assessment tools.

The following views, or principles, form the philosophical basis of the Canadian Language Benchmarks.

2.1 Language and language use

- Language is for communication
- Communication is a purposeful and meaningful social activity aimed at cooperation and maintenance of social relations; purpose and meaning in a social context are central to language and communication
- Language use is a dynamic, interactive process in a social context; it requires a continuous assessment of relevance of information, planning, construction, interpretation and negotiation of meaning through various strategies and processes
- Meaning is the relationship between the functional value of what is said, its form and the context. The context includes the participants, the intentions of the speaker and the expectations of the hearer, and the shared knowledge (framework of reference) between them
- Communication is based on choices and is interactive in nature, therefore not completely predictable.

In the CLB framework, proficiency in a second language means *communicative proficiency*: ability to use language for communication.

2.2 Adult second language learning

- Learning a language is learning to communicate through it in all modalities, all skills and competencies, and through integrating form, function and context. Spoken and written language competencies, although they draw from the same system, are not automatically learned one through the other. Each functional variety requires the development of specialized competencies.

- Adult second language proficiency develops both through conscious learning and through natural acquisition. Adult learners need opportunities for both. Both "communicative tasks" and "consciousness-raising", or "focus on grammatical form" in instruction benefit adult second language learner.
- Second language processing may comprise rule-based performance (constructing meaning by using grammar rules and patterns) and memory-based performance (recalling lexical chunks and holophrases, without considering form). Adult learners need opportunities to develop both.

- The development of communicative proficiency in second language learners is demonstrated through the progressively more effective, accurate, appropriate and fluent language use in increasingly demanding communicative contexts.

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing do not necessarily develop at the same pace. All learners' competencies (e.g., productive, receptive and interactive) should be acknowledged within the framework of the CLB to the degree that they have been developed.

- Most adult learners learn more effectively with explicit goals and objectives to guide their attention and monitor their learning.

2.3 The role of grammar, pronunciation, and fluency in defining a Benchmark standard

2.3.1 Grammar and a CLB Benchmark

While the linguistic component of communicative proficiency (e.g., grammar) constitutes a foundation of communicative language ability and must be the object of explicit instruction within communicative language teaching, a Benchmark does not list specific grammar elements which have to be mastered on exit. The CLB standards are statements of communicative competencies and performance tasks that demonstrate the application by the learner of the underlying knowledge (competence) and skills in communication. They are not descriptions of the learner's mastery of discrete elements of linguistic knowledge or micro-skills (e.g., past tense of irregular verbs.)

Some of the reasons why it is not possible or desirable to equate or align the CLB proficiency scale and its band descriptors with any grammatical syllabus are listed below.

The communicative competencies are not "grammar-driven" but "meaning and function-driven."

Every CLB competency and text naturally includes grammar (language forms), but the CLB standards are not focussed on an inventory of grammatical forms and their mastery and manipulation. For example:

"Change the sentences from the simple present tense into simple past tense" is not a CLB competency or task, but "Write an eye-witness account of what happened" or "Tell me what you saw" are tasks which illustrate well what may be considered a CLB competency of reporting/narrating past events.

There is no one -to-one correspondence between function and form in language use.

Grammatical structures cannot be prescriptively matched with a function without the full knowledge of the pragmatic (including socio-cultural) elements of the context of the communication. It is not possible to predict with any accuracy, only with some statistical probability, what grammar forms will be used in realizing a function. Authentic texts that beginner learners are exposed to in learning competencies and accomplishing tasks contain a variety of linguistic structures and vocabulary items.

The notion of linguistic simplicity in grammatical structures as a criterion for their selection and ordering according to levels (bands) of proficiency scales and for syllabus sequencing is not adequate.

What is simple linguistically is not equally simple to "learn, remember, produce or interpret. 'Linguistic' complexity and 'psychological' complexity are evidently not the same thing, although there may be some connection between them." (Corder,1973, p. 310).

Second language acquisition in adult learners depends on the first language; therefore, with different first language (L1) learners there may be a different sequence in the grammatical needs and syllabus objectives.

Given the present state of our knowledge about the relationship between second language acquisition and theories of language proficiency, it is neither possible nor desirable to line up specific grammatical structures with each benchmark in a "developmental" fashion.

As a consequence of the reasons above, implications for the assessment of communicative proficiency through the CLB competency standards follow below.

Since it is not possible to predict the presence of specific grammatical or lexical elements in language use, assessing oral proficiency must depend on global descriptors, and global and /or analytic rating schemes to describe the learner's control over form.

In a proficiency scale used for evaluating language performance, such as the CLB, only general statements of outcomes regarding the learner's control of form while accomplishing communication tasks can be made. (e.g., "Some grammatical inaccuracies; developing control of major patterns; grammar errors rarely impede communication" or "syntax is fragmented; very little control over basic grammar structures or verb tenses causes serious difficulties in communication.") In order to arrive at such general statements, we may decide to use more precise analytic categories and rating scales to determine what constitutes "very little control" or "developing control of major patterns." (e.g., we may comment on the accuracy of verb morphology, prepositions, and syntax ("no past tense morphemes in eight out of ten cases; omissions of 'be' copulas; omission of articles, incorrect negatives").

The evaluation of the CLB competencies involves the standards of satisfactory performance. The standards of satisfactory performance must include the criterion of grammatical accuracy, reflected in the evaluation scales.

The evaluation of benchmark outcomes includes evaluating the quality of communication. Grammatical, well-formed speech or writing in accomplishing benchmark competencies and tasks is one of the criteria of quality. Classroom assessment and monitoring of the learner's progress with the grammatical structures of English is a continuous on-going process during language instruction, and not limited to the evaluation of outcomes at the end of the course of study.

Implications for teaching

Recent psycholinguistic research points to the possibility that linguistic competence may be organized as a dual system for language processing. The two systems involved are: 1. a rule-based analytical system (grammar for generating new utterances), and 2. a memory-based storage system for generating formulaic constructions, lexicalized stems, and lexical phrases (prefabricated chunks of language).

The dual nature of linguistic competence implies that acquiring or learning it means not only learning the rules for generating correct novel utterances, but also learning formulaic speech through pattern memorization and imitation. It also means growth and change of the underlying learner grammar system called interlanguage. Under certain conditions, the developing interlanguage systems may "fossilize" (stop developing). To prevent fossilization, teachers make the learner consciously "notice" the correct grammatical form and facilitate its learning and automatization through various pedagogical tasks.

The role of ESL instructors in facilitating the learning and acquisition of the grammatical system of English by adult learners in the context of functionally stated outcomes and recent research findings is central, essential and complex. There may not be a structural strand in the syllabuses on which teachers are to base their instruction. Yet explicit exploration of how the grammar systems work to express specific meanings must be integrated into meaning-driven language teaching. It is the job of professional ESL instructors to provide meaningful and pedagogically effective grammar instruction as needed within the communicative language teaching approach. The starting point for systematic treatment by the ESL instructor is the learner's current linguistic competence.

Research suggests that explicit form-focused instruction (FFI) is very effective in communicatively based or content-based adult language classrooms. A 'blend of explicit instruction and implicit learning can be superior to either just explicit instruction or implicit learning alone.' (N. Ellis, 1995, p. 136)

Adult learners greatly benefit from skillful and systematic focus on form and other grammatical consciousness-raising methodological interventions by instructors. Without such interventions, the so-called "fossilization" of the 'transitional' learner's grammatical system may occur, impeding further development of linguistic competence.

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2.3.2 Pronunciation and a CLB Benchmark

What is the place of pronunciation in communicative proficiency? Pronunciation is a component of linguistic competence in the model of communicative proficiency used in the CLB. It includes:

- Suprasegmental features of speech (stress, rhythm and intonation, voice quality)
- Segmental features of speech (individual sounds: Canadian English vowels, consonants and consonant clusters, syllables)

Pronunciation is an important aspect of a person's ability to communicate through speech. However, like syntax, morphology, or vocabulary, it is not subject to itemization and sequencing of its elements as learning outcomes within the proficiency margins of a benchmark. A benchmark does not list specific pronunciation elements, which have to be mastered on exit, as it does not list the syntactic or morphological structures. The benchmark statements of competencies and performance tasks require the application by the learner of the underlying phonological competence and skills. The application is realized as intelligibility in speech. The monitoring or evaluating of learner intelligibility is guided by a scale of oral proficiency performance criteria.

The validity of such an approach to pronunciation within the communicative proficiency framework rests on a number of compelling reasons:

There is no systematic, one-to-one relationship between learners' clarity of pronunciation and their proficiency levels.

Several experimental studies have shown that accent does not seem to be closely associated with an individual's ability to function in a language. For example, the validation study for The Cambridge

Assessment of Spoken English (CASE) demonstrated that pronunciation relates highly to grammatical competence but not to discourse competence, strategic competence or general task achievement (Milanovic, Saville, Pollitt, & Cook, 1995). The common experience is that some highly proficient ESL speakers have a heavy "accent," and there are also ESL learners with less accented pronunciation who do not necessarily achieve high levels of proficiency. Accent is determined by L1, age of learning, motivation and aptitude, all of which vary in any given ESL setting.

There is no one-to-one relationship among accentedness, comprehensibility or intelligibility of speech.

Accentedness is a subjective judgement by a listener on the "heaviness" of the speaker's accent, that is, the extent to which a learner's spoken productions are judged to differ from the accent of the community. **Comprehensibility** is also a perception-based judgement by a listener of the relative difficulty or ease in understanding a speaker's accented speech. **Intelligibility** is an *objective measure* based on actual listener's comprehension (e.g., answering comprehension questions). Intelligibility of speech depends on many factors, including lexical choice, grammaticality, and fluency as well as pronunciation features. Some of the factors may relate to specific differences in various accents. (Derwing & Munro, 1997; Munro & Derwing, 1995).

Having a noticeable or even "heavy" accent is not considered a significant factor in oral proficiency as described by the CLB unless it affects the intelligibility of the speaker's speech (i.e. the listener's comprehension).

Although some features of accent (such as pronouncing {th} in a non-native way) are noticeable, they do not have a major impact on intelligibility. Accented speech does require, however, more processing time on the part of listeners as compared with native speaker speech. For example, it takes longer to react to the statements by ESL speakers as true/false than it does when responding to native speaker statements in the same way.

Contemporary research indicates that intelligibility is more strongly related to the prosodic elements of speech (e.g., stress, rhythm, and intonation) than to individual sounds.

Traditionally, language instruction methodologists and teachers maintained that clarity in pronunciation was ensured by the correct articulation of individual sounds of a language. Recent studies show that the pronunciation features that influence intelligibility the most are the global prosodic features (e.g., intonation, stress, rhythm), rather than individual sounds as thought previously.

Second language pronunciation in adult learners depends on the first language (mother tongue); with different L1 learners there will be different pronunciation learning needs and syllabus objectives.

It has also been established that typologically related languages are generally easier for L2 learners to pronounce than unrelated languages (Bongaerts, 1999).

Second language pronunciation depends on age.

Learner age in L2 acquisition has a significant impact on accent. It may be one mechanism in SLA which is age-dependent; after puberty, the acquisition of "native-like"accent is extremely rare. (Flege, Munro, & MacKay, 1995; Long, 1990).

Implications for teaching

The goal of the pronunciation syllabus is to address each learner's clarity of speech in view of:

- the learner's specific needs (specific intelligibility problems, goals);
- empirically identified factors which affect intelligibility most, and the teaching of which has been shown by research to be most effective and efficient in meeting the goal;
- socio-cultural appropriateness.

The general direction of the pronunciation syllabus should be from a wide-angle global view to zooming in on specific local elements as needed. (See "the zoom principle," Firth, 1992). The starting point is the learner's general speaking habits (e.g., mumbling, eye contact, volume), followed by suprasegmentals, followed by segmentals.

Ethical issues in the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL

There is the point of view that certain individuals are held back in the pursuit of their goals by an "accent ceiling". For those individuals, special pronunciation classes may be helpful. For the majority of adult ESL speakers, however, "accent reduction" classes will not eliminate an accent, according to the research evidence. Accent should not be treated as "pathology"; it is perfectly acceptable to have an accent (everybody has one), as long as speech intelligibility is not impaired.

While remedial classes teaching global prosodic features of speech do make a difference in better intelligibility evaluations of learners' speech over time, selling adult ESL learners on the idea that an "accent" is and will continue to be a problem and an obstacle in achieving their goals may be, in some cases, ethically unclear.

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2.3.3 Fluency and a CLB Benchmark

There is no one clear definition of fluency that we all share. The concept of fluency is difficult to define since it is a complex, and multi-dimensional phenomenon. Natural speech subjectively perceived as fluent, objectively is not fluent: it contains pauses and hesitations, reformulations, false starts, filled and unfilled pauses, repetitions, and other "imprecisions". These so called performative features whose functions are to gain time, to plan, manage the conversation, and mark text in various ways are frequent and multi functional in native-speakers' conversation, and all contribute to "fluency".

Fluency can be understood in narrow and measurable terms (quantitative), or global and impressionistic (qualitative) terms (e.g., as a level of overall proficiency). Traditionally, fluency has been closely related or even synonymous with oral proficiency as one of the criteria of oral performance evaluation. In some recent studies fluency is defined as a performance phenomenon, measured and described in purely temporal terms as a function of processing language in real time. In the CLB model of communicative proficiency (following Bachman, 1990), fluency is strongly related to strategic competence.

The information below summarizes some of the various perspectives:

Impressionistic assessment of fluency from a proficiency perspective as an indicator of rate and "effortlessness" in speech:

- Performance descriptor (e.g., " fluent speaker"; "makes unnatural pauses"; "many hesitations"; "speech is fast and fluent")
- Indicator of progress in oral proficiency (e.g., "speaks more fluently than before"; "improved fluency")

Fluency from a linguistic/temporal perspective as an aggregate of technical performance features in speech and measured by:

- False starts
- Hesitations
- Repetitions
- Reformulating
- Filled pauses/unfilled pauses
- Intonation
- Vocalisations
- Speech rates
- Number, distribution and length of pauses
- Mean length of "run" (the speech unit between two unfilled pauses)

Fluency from a semantic perspective

- Complexity of propositions (statements)
- Lexical type/token ratio
- Vocabulary range
- Use of idioms

Useful references

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2.4 The relationship between language development and the progression of the Benchmarks

The CLB scale does not claim to reflect the "natural" sequence of ESL development.

The CLB is based on a theory of language proficiency rather than on a theory of second language acquisition: an adequate model based on a description of a natural sequence in the development of adult second language acquisition is not available.

The CLB scale does not imply linear, sequential, additive or incremental learning/acquisition processes.

Language learning and acquisition are not just cumulative but integrative processes.[3] The CLB proficiency framework makes no claims as to when and how specific language features in the competencies should be achieved. Its focus is on description of the outcomes, not on the process and the timing to achieve them.

The hierarchical structure of the Benchmark stages implies progressively demanding contexts of language use.

Proficiency development is described as the increasing ability to communicate in progressively demanding contexts of language use (see Glossary - "demanding contexts of language use" for examples). Such contexts require increasing levels of quality of communication (e.g., accuracy, range, fluency, appropriateness and an increasingly more sophisticated relationship between function, form and context).

Demanding contexts imply "difficulty," which is a subjective term and depends on many contextual factors, including more objective estimates of the complexity of tasks and the complexity of the texts themselves. For example, some factors affecting difficulty in writing tasks are:

- purpose for writing (e.g., writing for personal, local or public use; writing to record, report, or analyse information, writing to persuade)
- familiarity with text genre/format (e.g., a memo, essay, newspaper editorial, or an evaluative report)
- amount of text to be written (volume) and its organizational complexity. (preparation, planning, research and re-writing involved)
- writer's degree of familiarity with the topic, vocabulary or related background knowledge
- writer's degree of familiarity with the task or situation: whether the task is a routine, repetitive or familiar task or not
- complexity of subject matter and volume of information
- particular level of formality or stylistic conventions required
- speed of task/time allotted
- risk level; what is at stake based on how the text is understood, evaluated or applied

2.5 *Canadian Language Benchmarks* as a framework for developing curricula and assessment / evaluation tools

The CLB is a framework of reference for adult ESL learning and ESL programming, based on a theoretical model of communicative proficiency. As a general framework it is capable of relating dimensions of language use, language teaching and development, and language assessment.

The CLB is both proficiency-based and competence-and-task- based. It combines the concept of proficiency bands (general benchmark descriptors, 1 to 12) with competencies and tasks as specific criterion-based standards for each band (social interaction, instructions, suasion, and information competencies for each Benchmark).

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[3] The CLB document adopts the view which R. Ellis calls "development-as-growth", rather than "development-as-sequence", in SLA. See Ellis, 1989.

The CLB is a set of descriptive statements about successive levels of achievement on the continuum of ESL performance. As an ESL communicative proficiency scale and framework, the CLB provides the user (e.g., curriculum developer, teacher, material developer, learner) with general proficiency guidelines, indicators and descriptors. It provides a common framework of standards for developing ESL programming (curricula, materials) and assessment instruments.

The CLB is concerned with the issues of 'what' (descriptive statements about successive levels of ability and competencies) and 'why' (research and theoretical foundations), but it is not concerned with issues of methods and techniques (the 'how' of teaching), which is the added focus in a curriculum / syllabus, and the specific domain of ESL teachers.

The CLB is not a proficiency test.

For a proficiency assessment, well-calibrated standardized testing instruments are used[4] to place the learner on the continuum described by the CLB in each of the skill areas. For curriculum outcomes (achievement), a variety of evaluation methods and tools can be used (e.g., a combination of assessment tasks, portfolio assessments, outcomes checklists, or exit tests). Such measures would be based on the curriculum but also, indirectly, on the CLB scale and framework descriptions.

The CLB is not a curriculum or a syllabus.

It does not specify the syllabus structure, or the selection, grading and sequencing of teaching items. It does not dictate local curricula and syllabi. It only provides a common standards framework to which various curricula can be related; it states what adult ESL instruction should prepare adult ESL learners to do in the area of communicative proficiency at each Stage and at each benchmark. Neither does the CLB prescribe any specific instructional method: the outcomes may be achieved by a number of methods and techniques.

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[4] Peirce, B. N., & Stewart, G. (1996). *The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment reading and writing manual.* Mississauga, ON: Peel Board of Education; Stewart, G., & Peirce, B. N. (1996). *The Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment listening and speaking manual.* Mississauga, ON: Peel Board of Education.

Chapter 3

The CLB rating scales: principles of assessment and evaluation in the CLB framework

This chapter provides the user of the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 with additional information about the purpose, principles, concepts and definitions behind the CLB rating scales. It is divided into two main parts: evaluating speaking and writing performance, and evaluating listening and reading. Information on the following topics is provided: holistic and analytic scoring approach to "productive" competencies; rating scales for speaking and writing; the criterion of effectiveness for listening and reading; and an example on how to use the scales.

Acknowledgements of sources used in developing the scales; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brindley & Nunan, 1992; Milanovic, Saville, Pollitt, & Cook, 1995; Pierce & Stewart, 1996; Rost, 1990; Stewart & Pierce, 1996; TEEP attribute scales, CALS, University of Reading, as cited by Weir, 1993.

The purpose of the CLB rating scales is to:

- provide a common frame of reference for instructors monitoring and evaluating learners' performance in language tasks in CLB-based programs
- relate the CLB assessment and evaluation, including Benchmark performance indicators, to the CLB foundation, the model of communicative proficiency, as illustrated below:

Some components of communicative proficiency	Some related scoring criteria
Linguistic competence ----- →	Accuracy of grammar Intelligibility of speech
Textual competence -------- →	Organization of discourse: coherence Cohesion
Socio-cultural competence ----→	Appropriateness

The scales reflect the performance indicators described in each Benchmark in the CLB 2000 and should be used in conjunction with them. They have been designed to help instructors determine with greater precision whether learners have achieved benchmark competencies to the required standard of performance.

3.1. Evaluating speaking and writing performance

3.1.1. Two kinds of scoring: holistic and analytic approach to evaluating productive competencies

Sometimes performance in the productive skills and competencies (speaking and writing) is evaluated and scored holistically, based on an overall impression. In other situations detailed scoring is used, which assigns separate scores to isolated traits; such detailed scoring procedures are called analytic. *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000* rating scales combine both types of scoring.

- First, the overall effectiveness of communication is scored, using the effectiveness criterion (holistic). The effectiveness criterion describes the overall communicative effect: it determines whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to the task requirements. The instructor-assessor asks the question: 'Has the purpose of communication been addressed? Has the speaker/writer demonstrated a global ability to perform the function required by the task, such as providing or requesting information? Is the listener/reader able to understand the message? Would the listener/reader be able to use (e.g., repeat to someone else) the message or its relevant details?

  Example: In a task *Ask for information needed and complete a text,* has the learner obtained the necessary information and completed the text, according to task specifications?

- Next, quality of communication is scored, using specific criteria that focus on relevant aspects of speaking or writing performance in a given task (analytic). Quality of communication criteria focus on specific aspects of communication: appropriateness, organization, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary, cohesion, intelligibilty (speech), legibility and mechanics (witing), fluency, adequacy and relevance of content, conversational management, negotiation of meaning.

3.1.2. Which criteria to select and how to weigh them?

It is usually not feasible to use all of the criteria all of the time in assessment / evaluation situations. A manageable number of factors must be chosen so that both the teacher-assessors and the learners can focus their attention on the quality of selected aspects of performance in specific tasks. Which of the analytical criteria should be selected then? The selection of the analytic criteria for a given task will depend on the benchmark level and the nature of the task, e.g., at Benchmark 1 in speaking or writing, the criteria of organization / coherence or conversation management will not apply since the learner is not capable of producing or managing connected discourse at this level of proficiency. The selected criteria should relate directly to either performance indicators for the relevant competency in the CLB 2000, to the most important factors of effective communication in a given task as determined by the teacher; to related classroom teaching and syllabus objectives and outcomes, or to all of the above. As learners move into higher Benchmark levels, the assessment / evaluation tasks increase in their complexity and variety (e.g., presentations and discussions are included as speaking tasks in Benchmark 5), and more or different criteria will apply.

The scales reflect the concern for both effectiveness and quality, including the importance of language form. The final score for a task is a combination of both effectiveness and quality criteria. The weight percentages (30% global effectiveness and 70% sum of analytic criteria) are a suggestion only, especially practical for Stage I Benchmarks.

However, instructors may decide to treat the effectiveness criterion as equal to every other selected analytic component and assign it an equal proportion of weight. For example, with five equal assessment criteria selected for a task, effectiveness being one of them, each component will be worth 20%. The weight of the specific analytic criteria will also change depending on their number, the task and the Benchmark level. For example, the instructor-assessor may decide that the weight of grammatical accuracy in a cover letter accompanying a resume or employment application at Benchmark 8 has to be no less than 40% of the total score, considering the importance of such a criterion in the employment market.

3.1.3. Overview of criteria and ratings in speaking and writing performance

Criteria	**Weight / points**
A. Effectiveness	1 2 3 4 (worth 30%)
B. Other criteria together	worth 70%
Details:	
Fluency	1 2 3 4
Appropriateness	1 2 3 4
Organization / Coherence	1 2 3 4
Vocabulary	1 2 3 4
Grammar (accuracy)	1 2 3 4
Intelligibility	1 2 3 4
Legibility and mechanics	1 2 3 4
Cohesion	1 2 3 4
Relevance and adequacy of content	1 2 3 4
Conversational management	1 2 3 4
Negotiation of meaning	1 2 3 4

As shown in the table, each criterion has ratings 1 through 4 for four levels of performance. The numbers indicate unsatisfactory, below average, satisfactory (adequate), and above satisfactory performance, as in the following Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000 table (with the added interpretation of the percentages):

Ratings for levels of performance

1- unable to achieve yet (less than 50%)
2- needs help (less than a pass)
3- satisfactory Benchmark achievement: pass ✓(70-80%)
4- more than satisfactory achievement

To conduct a speaking or writing competency assessment or evaluation, the instructor-assessor:

1. chooses the criteria for assessment / evaluation according to the situation and task;
2. rates the learner's performance level by circling the appropriate number (1, 2, 3, or 4);
3. calculates the total score by combining the holistic and analytic scores and weighing them according to the adopted formula (30-70% or other). (The point value of the global effectiveness ratings of 1, 2, 3, or 4 will be adjusted according to the maximum score achievable in a particular situation.)

But how can the assessor be sure what exactly "satisfactory" level in "grammatical accuracy" or "conversational management" mean, according to the scales? How can she or he be confident that she assesses the level of performance on any criterion the same way as the majority of other teachers in the CLB-based programs would? The meaning of the number ratings (1-4) is explained by four descriptors of levels of performance for each. The descriptors provide the characteristics of unsatisfactory, below average, satisfactory (adequate), and above satisfactory performance. (See the scales below.)

3.1.4. Evaluation of speaking: a checklist

A balanced CLB evaluation will include a variety of tasks and criteria, according to the standards in Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000. The following list is a thumbnail sketch of the evaluation considerations and combines types of tasks and the application of criteria in assessing performance in speaking competencies.

Summary checklist **for assessing / evaluating speaking competencies**		
Types of speaking tasks	**Monologic-type tasks*** (not reciprocal) Examples: Story telling / narration / report, presentation, instruction, announcement, leaving a voice mail message, description, comparison, opinion / evaluation, explanation, justification	**Interactional tasks**** (reciprocal) • Routine conversational exchanges • Formal and informal conversations, discussions, and debates
Holistic *assessment*	• Overall effectiveness	
Analytic *criteria to consider*	• Accuracy of grammar • Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose • Appropriateness • Organization / Coherence • Intelligibility • Fluency • Relevance and adequacy of content	*Same as in monologic tasks plus the following additional criteria:* • Conversational management • Negotiation of meaning

*Monologic-type (one-way) tasks: these tasks are longer stretches by one speaker, mostly of "transactional" nature (Brown & Yule, 1983). The primary function of these tasks is to convey information about facts, ideas, and feelings (ideational function). Other functions of monologic tasks are manipulative / directive. Examples: making a presentation to instruct / explain how to assemble, construct or cook something; making a presentation to persuade, propose, advise, recommend or warn.

** Interactional (two-way) tasks: their functions are both to interact to maintain social relationships (social interaction) and to conduct business (transactions). Examples: small talk, phone calls, service transactions, meetings, interviews, formal and informal conversations, debates, seminars, and other problem-solving and decision-making discussions.

3.1.5. A rating scale for evaluating speaking: the criteria and the descriptors of four levels of performance

Effectiveness:

1 Learner is not functionally effective in a speaking task; purpose of communication is impossible to achieve according to task requirements

2 Learner is functionally only marginally effective in a speaking task; purpose of communication is only marginally achieved according to task requirements. Interaction with others is difficult and punctuated by multiple misunderstandings

3 Learner is functionally effective in a speaking task; purpose of communication is achieved according to task requirements

4 Learner is functionally very effective in a speaking task; purpose of communication is achieved with excellence according to task requirements

This criterion describes whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to task requirements. Has the speaker demonstrated a global ability to perform the functions of spoken discourse in a speaking task, such as interacting in a formal interview, conducting a business/service transaction, interacting socially, providing or requesting information, according to the task requirements? Is the listener able to understand the speaker's message? If necessary, would the listener be able to use (repeat or reproduce in another way) the speaker's message or its relevant details?

Fluency:

1 Learner's speech is disfluent: halting, fragmented, and almost impossible to follow

2 Learner's speech has limited fluency and is difficult to follow. Utterances are hesitant and often incomplete, except in a few stock phrases. Many unfilled pauses* occurring in unlikely/unnatural positions* in an utterance

3 Learner's speech has sufficient fluency for the listener to follow its flow. Utterances may still be hesitant and sometimes incomplete and disjointed, but are longer and produced with fairly even tempo. Some noticeable long inappropriate pausing (some unfilled pauses occurring in unlikely/unnatural positions in an utterance) but conjunctions and other cohesive devices are used effectively to improve the flow of speech

4 Learner produces fluent, continuous, comprehensive and smooth discourse, with fairly even tempo. Pausing/hesitating or occasional stops (for grammatical planning, self-correction, elaboration or searching for a word) occur in natural positions* in an utterance; very few unfilled pauses occurring in unlikely/unnatural positions in an utterance

* Filled pauses - pauses filled with vocalisations and other time-gaining "fillers" normally used by competent speakers. Natural positions for pauses* - at clause junctures or at the end of phrases (semantically meaningful groups).

Appropriateness:

1 Not enough ability to function in speech to demonstrate appropriateness

2 Evidence to suggest insufficient awareness of socio-cultural appropriateness to context and purpose

in speech, e.g., differentiating between formal and informal registers, understanding "rules" of non-verbal communication in Canadian English

3 Developing sense of appropriateness of language and non-verbal behaviour to social contextual factors evident in accomplishing the task, e.g., some control of formal and informal registers in speech; some appropriate idioms, figurative language, cultural references (Benchmark levels 6-12). Still frequent non-native (unnatural*) phrasing of otherwise grammatical text.

4 Learner demonstrates appropriateness of language and non-verbal behaviour: control of both formal and informal register, knowledge of socio-cultural politeness conventions, control of appropriate cultural references, high degree of "naturalness" in expression.

This criterion describes appropriateness of language to the social and contextual factors of the situation, and to the purpose of communication (function and intention). It includes appropriate use of language and non-verbal behaviour, formality (register), style, politeness conventions, collaboration in a conversation, socio-cultural knowledge and references, and naturalness of expression.

* Pawley and Syder, 1983

Grammatical accuracy:

1 No control of grammar. Most grammatical patterns inaccurate. Errors may severely impede communication

2 Poor control of grammatical structures. Many grammatical inaccuracies and incomplete, fragmented structures (e.g. tense, word order, sentence structure, phrase structure errors) frequently impede communication.

3 Developing control of major grammatical patterns. Some grammatical inaccuracies which occasionally impede communication

4 Good control of grammatical structures. Few grammatical inaccuracies and minor slips which only rarely impede communication (e.g., articles)

Grammatical accuracy describes control of formal features of English, such as verb tenses, word order, sentence patterns, subordination, coordination, embedding (e.g., reported speech or relative clauses), parts of speech, inflections (e.g., agreement and concord), and prepositions. It is also about word usage and flexibility in the use of structures.

Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose:

1 Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the task

2 Vocabulary limited and restricting topics of interaction to discussing the most elementary or basic everyday needs; frequent lexical gaps and inaccuracies

3 Vocabulary generally sufficient for the task; there may be some lexical inaccuracies, search for words, and circumlocution

4 Evidence of adequate and accurate vocabulary for the task; only rare circumlocution. Skilful use of idiomatic language

This criterion describes adequacy of vocabulary for topic and purpose; appropriate word choice, knowledge of English collocations, lexical phrases, and idioms.

Organization / Coherence:

1 No apparent organization / coherence in oral discourse: no apparent structure to follow in a presentation, story, or interaction. Main idea of discourse is unclear

2 Very little organization / coherence in oral discourse; underlying structure is not sufficiently apparent and main idea is still difficult to grasp

3 Adequate organization / coherence in oral discourse; apparent development to follow in a presentation, story, or interaction. Clear main idea(s), with adequate support. Some deficiencies in organizational devices (discourse signals)

4 Very good organization / coherence in oral discourse; clear internal development structure, good support for main ideas and clear organizational devices (discourse signals)

This criterion describes organization of discourse in a presentation or in long turns* in a conversation. It is mostly about rhetorical organization of speech and the ability to produce longer stretches of connected discourse but also about appropriate use of formal schemata for different exchanges or transactions such as an interview, or a service transaction (e.g., ordering food at a restaurant, visit to a doctor).

* A turn is everything that one speaker says before another speaker begins to speak in an exchange. A long turn is an unassisted longer and logical whole or coherent fragment of connected speech, which is part of spoken interaction.

Intelligibility:

1 Severe and constant rhythm, intonation, and articulation problems (vowels and consonants) cause almost complete unintelligibility

2 Understanding is difficult and achieved only after frequent repetitions

3 Rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation of segments require concentrated listening, but only an occasional intelligibility problem arises and requires repetition

4 Rhythm, intonation, and articulation are reasonably comprehensible to competent speakers; a repetition is very rarely required; accentedness of speech does not cause comprehension problems

Relevance and adequacy of content:

1 Irrelevant and/or inadequate response according to the task requirements

2 Response of limited relevance and/or insufficient adequacy according to the task requirements

3 Mostly relevant and adequate response according to the task requirements; may have some gaps or redundancies

4 Relevant and adequate response according to the task requirements

This criterion describes learner's response to the task in terms of topic. For example, in a presentation about safety in the home, has the learner addressed relevant points adequately?

Conversation management

1 No ability to: a. follow the structure of a conversation or exchange; b. to open, join, maintain, and close / leave a conversation; c. to encourage contributions from others; d. to take turns, hold the floor, change the topic.

2 Insufficient ability to: a. follow the structure of a conversation or exchange; b. to open, join, maintain, and close / leave a conversation; c. to encourage contributions from others; d. to take turns, hold the floor, change the topic.

3 Adequate ability to: a. follow the structure of a conversation or exchange; b. to open, join, maintain, and close / leave a conversation; c. to encourage contributions from others; d. to take turns, hold the floor, change the topic.

4 Very good ability to: a. follow the structure of a conversation or exchange; b. to open, join, maintain, and close / leave a conversation; c. to encourage contributions from others; d. to take turns, hold the floor, change the topic.

This criterion describes the ability to participate actively in a conversation according to the socio-cultural rules and expectations.

Negotiation of meaning

1 No ability to seek and provide successful clarification of meaning

2 Insufficient ability to seek and provide successful clarification of meaning

3 Adequate ability to seek and provide successful clarification of meaning; learner uses some interactional strategies, such as clarification requests and comprehension checks

4 Very good ability to seek and provide successful clarification of meaning; uses a number of interactional strategies, including clarification requests, communication (compensatory) strategies, comprehension checks, and interpretive summaries (paraphrasing / rephrasing)

This criterion describes seeking and providing clarification by a learner in the process of communication.

3.1.6. Evaluation of writing: a checklist

A balanced CLB evaluation will include a variety of tasks and criteria, according to the standards in *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*. The following list is a thumbnail sketch of the writing evaluation considerations.

Summary checklist for assessing / evaluating writing competencies		
Types of writing	**Unformatted texts*** (prose) • Conveying social messages	**Formated texts**** (documents) • Expressing and recording

tasks	• Conveying business / service messages (notes, memos, letters; inquiries, requests, directions, instructions, applications, offers, proposals) • Expressing factual and prepositional information, ideas, attitudes (describing objects, events, people; describing phenomena; describing processes; arguing a point) • Recording information (copying prose text, reproducing spoken or written information as paraphrase, point-form outline, overview, or summary)	information and ideas as : lists, schedules, tables, charts, outlines in point form, agendas, minutes, forms, invoices, bills, receipts, diagrams, graphs, and other formats
Holistic assessment	• Overall effectiveness	
Analytic criteria to consider	• Accuracy of grammar • Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose • Cohesion • Organization / Coherence • Legibility / mechanics: handwriting, spelling, punctuation • Appropriateness of style, register, layout of text to audience and purpose • Relevance, factual accuracy, and adequacy of content	• Appropriateness of style, register, layout of text to audience and purpose • Accuracy of grammar • Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose • Legibility / mechanics: handwriting, spelling, punctuation • Relevance, factual accuracy, and adequacy of content

***Unformatted text tasks:** those tasks involve stretches of prose text, both of "transactional" (business elements) and "interactional" (social elements) nature (Brown and Yule, 1983). The functions of those tasks are to interact to maintain social relationship (social interaction competencies) and to interact to conduct business (transactions). (e.g., writing personal and business notes and letters, orders, inquiries, clarifications, instructions, recipes and manuals; writing to persuade, propose, advise, recommend.) The other major function of those tasks is to convey propositional information about facts, ideas, and attitudes (ideational function), (e.g., stories, compositions, reports, essays, papers, and articles.)

****Formatted text tasks:** those tasks are mostly of "transactional" nature (Brown and Yule, 1983), e.g., filling out forms, constructing/developing forms. The primary function is presenting factual information in a condensed format as "formatted document". Formatted texts can be a part of a larger prose text. Not all of the same criteria will apply to evaluating both types.

3.1.7. A rating scale for evaluating writing: the criteria and the descriptors of four levels of performance

Effectiveness:

1 Learner is not yet functionally effective in writing; purpose of communication is not achieved according to task requirements

2 Learner is functionally only marginally effective in writing; purpose of communication is only marginally achieved according to task requirements

3 Learner is functionally effective in writing; purpose of communication is achieved according to task requirements)

4 Learner is functionally very effective in writing; purpose of communication is achieved with excellence according to task requirements

Effectiveness describes whether the global purpose of communication has been achieved according to task requirements. Has the writer demonstrated a global functional ability to perform the writing task according to task requirements? Is the reader able to understand the writer's message? If necessary, would the reader be able to use the writer's text, according to task requirements?

Appropriateness:

1 Not enough ability to function in writing to demonstrate appropriateness

2 Evidence to suggest insufficient awareness of socio-cultural appropriateness of language and/or format to social contextual factors and purpose.

3 Developing sense of appropriateness of language, format / text layout to social contextual factors evident in accomplishing the task. Evidence of some control of formal and informal registers in writing, and of using appropriate idioms, figurative language, and cultural references (for Benchmark levels 6-12). Still frequent non-native (unnatural*) phrasing of otherwise grammatical text

4 Good appropriateness of language, format, and layout to social contextual factors: control of formal and informal register, knowledge of socio-cultural conventions, evidence of appropriate cultural references, high degree of "naturalness" in expression. Errors likely to cause social misunderstandings are rare

In written texts, appropriateness includes language, suitable format, layout, visual/graphic presentation of text to audience and purpose, appropriate use of formality, register, style, and socio-cultural knowledge and references (e.g., cultural metaphors, quotations, etc.) and naturalness of expression. (Pawley and Syder, 1983)

Organization:

1 No apparent organization in text

2 Very little organization of content; an attempt to develop a theme, but main idea(s) and underlying structure are not sufficiently apparent

3 Adequate development structure, adequate support for main idea(s). Some deficiencies in

paragraph development and some lack of clear connections between paragraphs
4 Clear internal development structure, clear organizational devices, and good support for main ideas

This criterion describes: textual or rhetorical organization (coherence) of text. A well-organized coherent text develops logically, according to its purpose/function. It follows certain thematic organization patterns (e.g., topic and comment/main idea and supporting details) and rhetorical modes (e.g., temporal/chronological ordering and sequence, cause-effect, condition-result, comparison-contrast, etc.). It contains discourse markers or rhetorical pattern signals, such as: *first, to conclude, besides, for instance, as mentioned above, in other words, to sum up*. A well-organized coherent text is easy to follow and to interpret as to its purpose / function.

Cohesion:

1 Cohesion almost totally absent. Writing is fragmented and disjointed. Comprehension almost impossible
2 Unsatisfactory cohesion: clauses are not appropriately and adequately connected through cohesion devices. Difficulty in comprehension
3 Adequate cohesion but occasional deficiencies in the use of cohesive devices make communication less that totally clear and effective
4 Very good use of cohesion devices to link all elements of text together; very good flow and connectedness of text for effective communication

This criterion describes surface connectedness between clauses in the text achieved by formal textual links (syntactic, semantic) between sentences and their parts. Cohesion is involved in producing explicit relationships among utterances or sentences of a text. Cohesion rules dictate how sentences/clauses in a piece of text may be "stitched together", or externally and internally connected with each other by cohesion devices into connected discourse. Cohesion devices include reference, ellipsis, deixis, conjunctions (grammatical), repetitions, substitutions/ synonyms, lexical chains, and parallel structures.

Grammatical accuracy:

1 Inadequate control of grammar; most grammatical patterns inaccurate; errors severely impede text comprehension
2 Poor control of grammatical structures: many grammatical inaccuracies (e.g. tense, word order, sentence structure, phrase structure) frequently impede text comprehension
3 Some grammatical inaccuracies which occasionally impede text comprehension
4 Few grammatical inaccuracies and minor slips, unlikely to impede text comprehension

This criterion describes control of formal features of English, such as verb tenses, word order, sentence patterns, subordination, coordination, embedding (e.g., reported speech or relative clauses), parts of speech, inflections (e.g., agreement and concord), and prepositions, as well as range and flexibility in the use of structures.

Adequacy of vocabulary for purpose:

1 Vocabulary inadequate even for the most basic parts of the task
2 Limited vocabulary, inadequate for the task. Frequent lexical gaps and inaccuracies. Frequent repetition and circumlocution

3 Vocabulary mostly sufficient for the task, but there may be some lexical inaccuracies and inadequacies, and circumlocution
4 Expanded vocabulary adequate and accurate for the task; almost no inadequacies, only rare inappropriateness or circumlocution. Skilful use of idiomatic language

Legibility/mechanics: handwriting, spelling, punctuation:
1 Much of the spelling inaccurate; systematic omissions in punctuation; and /or barely legible handwriting
2 Low standard of accuracy in spelling and punctuation and/or low legibility of handwriting
3 Some inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation; legible handwriting
4 Good control over spelling; good knowledge of punctuation conventions; few inaccuracies; legible handwriting

Relevance, accuracy and adequacy of content:
1 Irrelevant, inaccurate and/or inadequate response according to task requirements
2 Response of limited relevance, accuracy and/or adequacy according to task requirements
3 Mostly relevant, accurate, and adequate response according to task requirements; may have some gaps or redundancies and repetitions
4 Relevant, accurate, and adequate response according to task requirements

"Accuracy" in the criterion applies to research-based tasks which require factually accurate information.

3.2 Evaluating listening and reading performance

3.2.1 The "effectiveness of comprehension" criterion

In listening and reading it is difficult to apply similar descriptors to performance as we do in speaking and writing. The only real criterion of performance in listening or reading is the measure of effectiveness: the numerical score of correct responses to a comprehension task. For example, out of twenty questions related to a listening or reading text, the learner responded correctly to fifteen.

Effectiveness is calculated as a combined score of the sub-component measures in listening and reading performance selected appropriately for the level, text, and task. The sub-component measures reflect different factors in comprehension. The summative score is translated into a descriptor of a certain level of effectiveness (1, 2, 3, or4).

Given the possibility of error in evaluation, a passing mark in comprehension is set at 70-80% (and not at 100%). For example, the learner must correctly answer 7 out of 10 comprehension questions to receive a passing score on a task. The questions may be of various types, including fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and multiple choice. They may also reflect different factors in comprehension (sub-components); they may be asking about the perception level comprehension (sounds in listening; decoding print in reading), literal comprehension (what is said or written), inferential comprehension (what is left unsaid; reading between the lines), and evaluation (interpreting the implications).

In low Benchmark tasks, the comprehension questions asked of the learner may be mostly of one or two types (e.g., perceptual and literal comprehension questions). In higher Benchmarks, the effectiveness score reflects many more of the sub-component listening measures, as selected by the instructor. For example, in listening to an extensive oral text or in reading an extensive text, a learner may be asked several literal comprehension questions, several inferential comprehension questions, several evaluation questions (appropriateness, fact versus opinion), and one or two reorganization (reproducing information) questions. Alternatively, each different text/task may focus on one aspect of listening or reading and apply the criterion of effectiveness to its relevant measure.

The following table summarizes the ratings of the "effectiveness of comprehension" (both in listening and reading) levels of performance.

Effectiveness: ratings for performance levels in listening and reading

1	Fewer than 50% of the items	Performance not successful relative to task requirements; learner responds correctly to fewer than 50% of the items in the measured category
2	50-69% of the items	Performance marginally successful relative to task requirements; learner responds correctly to more than 49% but fewer than 70% of the items in the measured category
3	70-80% of the items	Performance successful relative to task requirements; learner responds correctly to 70-80% of the items in the measured category

4	More than 80% of the items	Performance very successful relative to task requirements; learner responds correctly to more than 80% of the items in the measured category

3.2.2 Overview of sub-component measures in receptive competencies

This table is a summary of the sub-component measures which may be considered in evaluating performance in listening or reading tasks.

Sub-components of listening and reading	Pass (satisfactory performance level)
Understanding a reading text as print (sound/symbol relationship)	**70-80%** of total maximum score
Understanding phonological features of speech	
Understanding vocabulary	
Understanding grammar cues	
Understanding text cohesion	
Understanding text organization / coherence	
Literal comprehension	
Inferential comprehension	
Understanding text function	
Distinguishing facts and opinions	
Evaluating point of view, tone, style, attitude, intention	
Evaluating content: relevance, accuracy, validity, adequacy	

3.2.3 Evaluation of listening: a checklist

A balanced CLB evaluation will include a variety of tasks and criteria, according to the standards in Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000. The following list is a thumbnail sketch of the evaluation considerations and combines types of tasks, purpose for listening, and the application of sub-component measures in assessing performance in listening competencies.

Summary checklist **for assessing / evaluating listening competencies**		
Types of listening tasks *	**Monologue-type tasks**** Understanding monologue-type listening tasks (audio, video, or live) in order to:	**Interactional tasks***** Understanding interactional listening tasks (audio, video, or live) in order to:
Purpose for listening	• get the gist (overall meaning) of the listening text • get the main ideas and important information • get specific details • compare and integrate specific information • get detailed understanding of the listening text and its parts • evaluate/critique the listening text • reduce (reorganize/reproduce) the listening text to salient or relevant points	
Evaluation	Combined analytic measures selected, appropriate to the Benchmark level and nature of the task, and resulting in an "effectiveness of comprehension" score. (See the previous table.)	

*Listening competencies in this chart refer only to non-participant type of listening in which the listener listens to other people's presentations and conversations but does not normally respond or has limited rights to speak. (Lynch, 1996; Rost, 1990).

**Examples of monologue (one-way) tasks: listening to messages, directions, instructions, news broadcasts, public announcements, documentaries, songs, poems, presentations, lectures.

***Examples of interactional (two-way) tasks: listening to other people's small talk, phone calls, service transactions, meetings, interviews, formal and informal conversations, debates, seminars, and other problem-solving and decision-making discussions.

3.2.4 Evaluation of reading: a checklist

The following summary checklist combines types of tasks, purpose for reading, and the application of sub-component measures in assessing performance in reading competencies.

Summary checklist
for assessing / evaluating reading competencies

Types of reading tasks	**Understanding prose texts (unformatted)*** Reading social interaction messages, business (service) messages, and informational texts in order to:	**Understanding formatted texts**** Reading formatted verbal texts and non-verbal graphic displays in print and non-print media (e.g., including computer screen, micro-fiche documents, etc.) in order to:
Purpose for reading	• get the gist of the text (overall meaning) and its purpose • identify parts of the text relevant to reading purpose/need • locate specific information • locate, compare/contrast, and integrate several pieces of information • get the global understanding of the text and its main ideas • get the detailed understanding of the whole text and its parts • evaluate/critique the text • reduce (reorganize, reproduce) text to salient or relevant points • transcode (transpose from graphic to verbal text), interpret, and use information	
Evaluation	Combined analytic measures selected, appropriate to the Benchmark level and nature of the task, and resulting in an "effectiveness of comprehension" score. (See previous summary tables.)	

* Examples of prose/unformatted texts: stories, compositions, notes, letters, reports, essays, papers, articles.

** Examples of formatted texts: signs, icons, lists, forms, classified ads, schedules, tables, charts, agendas, minutes, invoices, bills, receipts, payroll forms and stubs, diagrams, graphs, maps, blueprints, drawings, schematics, weather reports, stock market reports.

3.2.5 Explaining the sub-component measures in listening and reading

Which underlying abilities are involved when learners process a listening or a reading text? The explanations / descriptions below provide only a basic sketch of which complex operations may be involved.

Understanding phonological features of speech in a listening text:
This measure describes the learner's ability to recognize words, phrases and individual sounds (phonemes) as well as suprasegmentals (e.g., stress, intonation, rhythm) and their meaning in listening texts.

Understanding a reading text as print (sound-symbol relationship):
This measure describes the basic perceptual and mechanical nature of deciphering meaning through print. It describes the knowledge of the visual and phonetic features of English (graphophonic cues), sound-symbol correspondence, graphic features and conventions of the writing system, visual patterning and sound decoding, and sight recognition at word, phrase, and sentence level. It is appropriate at the beginning levels of reading in ESL; later on, it is subsumed automatically in other measures.

Understanding vocabulary in a text:
This measure describes knowledge and recognition of words in context; knowledge and anticipation of how words connect with each other in likely combinations and which combinations are unlikely or impossible; using semantic cues to interpret the text; using the surrounding text and other cues to guess the likely meaning of unknown words; and inferring meaning through word formation.

Understanding grammar in a text:
This measure describes the learner's understanding of the listening or reading text through the understanding of its grammatical features.

Understanding signals of cohesion in a text:
This measure describes understanding of surface connectedness between clauses in a reading text (or utterances in a listening text), achieved by grammatical and lexical links between sentences and their parts. Cohesion links include reference, ellipsis, deixis, conjunctions, repetitions, substitutions/synonyms, lexical chains, and parallel structures. By attending to cohesive ties, the learner is able to recognize what refers or connects to what across the text, sentences, and paragraphs, or in a stretch of spoken discourse, and is able to synthesize information or extract relevant ideas and details.

Understanding elements of coherence in a text:
This measure describes understanding of the "organization" of the discourse and its content. The content of a coherent text, for example an argument, is well developed logically and rhetorically, according to the text purpose/function and audience. The text follows certain thematic organization patterns (e.g., topic and comment/main idea and supporting details) and rhetorical modes (e.g., temporal/chronological ordering and sequence, cause-effect, condition-result, comparison-contrast, etc.). It contains discourse markers or rhetorical pattern signals, such as: *first, to conclude, besides, for instance, as mentioned above, in other words, to sum up*. A well-organized coherent text is easier to follow and interpret.

Some of the assessment / evaluation issues in understanding text / discourse organization or coherence: Can the learner perceive the discourse markers or rhetorical pattern signals in a written text? Can the learner perceive and follow the organization and development in a conversation or in a presentation? Can the learner identify the major patterns of text organization? Can the learner follow connected discourse as a logical sequence of propositional structures: temporal, spatial, cause-effect, condition-result, etc.? Can the learner recognize the appropriate use of formal schemata of different types of texts (genres), e.g., the form and organization of a narration, an interview, or a service transaction (e.g., doctor's appointment, purchase)?

One competency that specifically requires understanding of the organizational structure of a text and its content is "reducing the text into relevant points". Reduction occurs through paraphrasing or condensing information in the form of a classification, outline, overview, or summary, or through a synthesis (consolidating information from several sources).

Literal comprehension:

This measure describes the degree (effectiveness) of literal comprehension of explicit information in a listening or reading text according to the task requirements. How much of the literal information is the learner able to understand? Is the learner able to use the information to accomplish other tasks? The competencies involve recognition (identification) and recall of details; main ideas and supporting details; sequence; descriptions; analogy, comparison/contrast; classification; cause and effect relationships (argumentative and logical organization).

Inferential comprehension:

This measure describes the degree (effectiveness) of comprehension of information when not explicitly stated but only implied. Inferring means using various available clues (syntactic, semantic, logical, contextual) to construct the meaning of unknown elements of the text or unstated information about it. How much is the learner able to infer using information in the text, or other knowledge, including own experience, or both text and other knowledge? Is the learner able to use the information to accomplish other tasks? The competencies involve: relating utterances to the social and situational context in which they are made, inferring pragmatic meaning as an imputed (indirect) function, inferring the main idea when it is not explicitly stated, inferring supporting details (suggesting additional details), inferring sequence (what will happen, what might have happened), comparison, cause and effect relationships and outcomes (speakers' intentions), inferring literal meanings from the figurative use of language, and deducing the meaning and use of unfamiliar words.

Making inferences may involve drawing on textual clues and knowledge of the structure of language, drawing on the knowledge of immediate context of the situation, drawing on the socio-cultural context and/or drawing on the broad context of world knowledge schemata (interpreting the text by going outside it).

Understanding function in a text:

This measure describes understanding the purpose and communicative value of the audio/video listening text or a reading text, parts of the text or single utterances or sentences, and the speaker's/writer's intended effect, with and without explicit indicators about the text's audience, purpose, and function. Both literal and inferential comprehension may be involved in determining this aspect of discourse.

Distinguishing facts and opinions:
This measure describes the ability to distinguish facts and opinions, supported and unsupported data in the text.

Evaluating point of view, tone, style, attitude/intentions in a text:
This measure describes the ability to evaluate the point of view, tone, style, and speaker's attitude and intentions in a listening text. It may also involve making judgements about appropriateness to social contextual factors, and about purpose (function and intention) of the speakers. Some "critical listening" questions that learners may be asked to address are: "Why is this topic being talked about?"; "How is this topic being talked about?"; "What other ways of talking about the topic are there?" (based on Kress 1985, p. 7). Non-verbal (paralinguistic) communication elements are also evaluated in a listening text when visual / video information is available.

Evaluating relevance, validity, and adequacy of information in a text:
This measure describes the ability to evaluate text content on the basis of its relevance, accuracy, validity, and adequacy in relation to function and purpose. It involves drawing conclusions and generalizations.

3.3 An example of using the CLB scales: Scoring a writing task

In the example below, the same CLB assessment / evaluation writing task was given to three students. The table illustrates the scoring the three students received. Student A demonstrated outstanding performance and achieved a maximum rating. Student B's performance in the task was satisfactory: a pass. Student C did not achieve a passing grade and needs help / more practice to achieve the standard in the particular competency that the task evaluates.

Criteria used	Student A	Student B	Student C
Effectiveness	**4** (worth 30%)	**3** (worth 30%)	**2** (worth 30%)
Other criteria (below) combined	worth 70%	worth 70%	worth 70%
Details:			
Organisation	**4**	**3**	**2**
Appropriateness of style, register, layout, and format of text to purpose	**4**	**2**	**3**

Grammar	4	3	2
Vocabulary	4	3	3
Legibility/mechanics	4	4	3
Cohesion	4	2	2
Relevance of content	4	4	2

On effectiveness of the text (holistic score), Student A received the maximum, 4 out of 4 points, which translates into a maximum possible subscore of 30%. On the combined analytic criteria (quality of the writing), the score was 28 out of 28 points, worth a maximum possible subscore of 70% (producing a final composite score of 100%). A passing score is established at 75% of the maximum score. Student B achieved 3 out of 4 points for effectiveness (a subscore of 22.5% of a possible 30%), and 21 out of 28 points (a subscore of 52.5% of a possible 70%) for the quality of the text (analytic criteria), for a total composite score of 75%, which is a pass (satisfactory achievement). Student C received only 2 out of 4 points (a subscore of 15% of a possible 30%) and 17 out of 28 points (a subscore of 42.5% out of a possible 70%) for his performance, giving a total composite score of 57.5%, which is less than a pass. The students' performance in accomplishing the task can be reported in short as follows:

Student A's Rating

1 ___
2 ___
3 ___

Student B's Rating

1 ___
2 ___
3 ✓

Student C's Rating

1 ___
2 ✓
3 ___

Appendix

CLB overviews: Global performance descriptors (Benchmark profiles) 1-12

In *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*, each Benchmark contains a global performance descriptor or a short Benchmark performance profile. It is similar to a typical "band" descriptor in many proficiency scales and describes a "generalized level of performance."

The following overviews of Benchmark performance profiles can help to provide a better sense of the progression of performance profiles along the CLB continuum. The overviews provide a glimpse of the progressive complexity of communicative ability across the twelve Benchmarks. They show increasingly complex competencies and communication contexts. The overviews included are the following:

- Speaking Benchmarks
- Listening Benchmarks
- Reading Benchmarks
- Writing Benchmarks

A. An overview of Speaking Benchmarks: Global performance descriptors

B.1 Learner can speak very little, mostly responding to basic questions about personal information and immediate needs in familiar situations. Speaks in isolated words or strings of 2 to 3 words. Demonstrates almost no control of basic grammar structures and verb tenses. Demonstrates very limited vocabulary. No evidence of connected discourse. Makes long pauses, often repeats the other person's words. Depends on gestures in expressing meaning and may also switch to first language at times. Pronunciation difficulties may significantly impede communication. Needs considerable assistance.

B.2 Learner can communicate in a very limited way some immediate and personal needs in familiar situations. Asks and responds to simple, routine, predictable questions about personal information. Demonstrates little control of basic grammar structures and tenses. Demonstrates limited vocabulary and a few simple learned phrases. No evidence of connected discourse. Makes long pauses and depends on gestures in expressing meaning. Pronunciation difficulties may significantly impede communication. Needs frequent assistance.

B.3 Learner can communicate with some difficulty basic immediate needs and personal experience, in short informal conversations. Asks and responds to simple familiar questions, including WH questions;

uses single words and short sentences. Demonstrates some control of very basic grammar (basic structures and tenses). Many structures are reduced. Uses basic time expressions; the correct past tense is used only with some common verbs. Demonstrates use of vocabulary that is still somewhat limited for basic everyday topics. Evidence of some connected discourse (and, but). Pronunciation difficulties may often impede communication. Sometimes needs assistance.

B.4 Learner can take part in short routine conversations about needs and familiar topics of personal relevance with supportive listeners. Can communicate basic needs and personal experience. Can ask and respond to simple familiar questions. Can describe a situation; tell a simple story; describe the process of obtaining essential goods (e.g., purchasing, renting) or services (e.g., medical). Uses a variety of short sentences. Demonstrates control of basic grammar (basic structures and verb tenses). Uses correct past tense with many common verbs. Demonstrates adequate vocabulary for routine everyday communication. Clear evidence of connected discourse (and, but, first, next, then, because). Pronunciation difficulties may impede communication. Needs only a little assistance. Can use the phone only for very short, simple, predictable exchanges; communication without visual support is very difficult for him/her.

B.5 Learner can participate with some effort in routine social conversations and can talk about needs and familiar topics of personal relevance. Can use a variety of simple structures and some complex ones, with occasional reductions. Grammar and pronunciation errors are frequent and sometimes impede communication. Demonstrates a range of common everyday vocabulary and a limited number of idioms. May avoid topics with unfamiliar vocabulary. Demonstrates discourse that is connected (and, but, first, next, then, because) and reasonably fluent, but hesitations and pauses are frequent. Can use the phone to communicate simple personal information; communication without visual support is still very difficult for him/her.

B.6 Learner can communicate with some confidence in casual social conversations and in some less routine situations on familiar topics of personal relevance. Can communicate facts and ideas in some detail: can describe, report, and provide a simple narration. Can use a variety of structures with some omission/reduction of elements (e.g., articles, past tense morphemes). Grammar and pronunciation errors are frequent and may sometimes impede communication. Demonstrates a range of everyday vocabulary, some common phrases and idioms. Demonstrates discourse that is reasonably fluent, with frequent normal hesitations. Can use the phone to communicate on familiar matters, but phone exchanges with strangers are stressful.

B.7 Learner can communicate comfortably in most common daily situations. Can participate in formal and informal conversations, involving problem solving and decision-making. Can speak on familiar concrete topics at a descriptive level (5 to 10 min.); can present a detailed analysis or comparison. Can use a variety of sentence structures (including compound and complex sentences) and an expanded inventory of concrete and common idiomatic language. Grammar and pronunciation errors are still frequent, but rarely impede communication. Discourse is reasonably fluent, with frequent self-corrections and/or rephrasing. Uses phone for familiar and routine matters; clarifying unknown details may still present communication problems.

B.8 Learner can communicate effectively in most daily practical and social situations, and in familiar routine work situations. Can participate in conversations with confidence. Can speak on familiar topics at both concrete and abstract levels (10 to 15 min.). Can provide descriptions, opinions, and explanations; can synthesize abstract complex ideas; can hypothesize. In social interaction, learner demonstrates an increased ability to respond appropriately to the formality level of the situation. Can use a variety of sentence structures, including embedded/report structures, and an expanded inventory of concrete, idiomatic, and conceptual language. Grammar and pronunciation errors rarely impede communication. Discourse is reasonably fluent. Uses phone on less familiar and some non-routine matters.

B.9 Learner can independently, through oral discourse, obtain, provide, and exchange key information for important tasks (work, academic, personal) in complex routine and a few non-routine situations in some demanding contexts of language use. Can actively and effectively participate in 30-minute formal exchanges about complex, abstract, conceptual, and detailed information and ideas to analyse, to problem-solve, and to make decisions. Can make 15- to 30-minute prepared formal presentations. Can interact to coordinate tasks with others, to advise or persuade (e.g., to sell or recommend a product or service), to reassure others, and to deal with complaints in one-on-one situations. Grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation errors very rarely impede communication. Prepared discourse is mostly accurate in form, but may often be rigid in its structure / organization and delivery style.

B.10 Learner can, through oral discourse, obtain, exchange, and present information, ideas, and opinions for important tasks (work, academic, personal) in complex routine and some non-routine situations in many demanding contexts of language use. Can actively participate in formal meetings, interviews, or seminars about complex, abstract, conceptual, and detailed topics. Can lead routine meetings and manage interaction in a small, familiar, cooperating group. Can make 20-to 40-minute prepared formal presentations. Can communicate to present and analyse information and ideas, to argue a point, to problem-solve, to make decisions, to advise /inform or persuade, to give complex directions/instructions, and to socialize/entertain in a formal one-on-one business situation. Grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation errors very rarely impede communication. Prepared discourse is almost always grammatically accurate and may be syntactically complex, but may lack flexibility in the structure of information, organization, and style of delivery in view of purpose and audience.

B.11 Learner can, through oral discourse, obtain, exchange, and present information, ideas, and opinions for complex tasks (work, academic, personal). Can satisfy many social, academic, or work-related expectations for competent communication. Can contribute to extended authentic exchanges (over 60 minutes) about complex, abstract, conceptual, and detailed topics in public, in large formal and unfamiliar groups. Can lead routine meetings and manage interaction in large familiar and cooperative groups, and deliver prepared presentations. Can skilfully communicate to persuade, to provide basic counselling (e.g., about products, services, programs), to assess needs or evaluate detailed or complex information in a one-on-one routine situation. Grammar, vocabulary, or pronunciation errors do not impede communication.

In presentations, can demonstrate sophisticated language form with good flexibility in the structure of information, organization, and delivery style in view of purpose and audience.

B.12 Learner can create and co-create oral discourse, formal and informal, general or technical, in own field of study or work, in a broad range of complex situations. Satisfies most academic and work-related expectations for competent communication. Can deliver public presentations to audiences. Can lead formal group discussions, meetings, and workshops. Can communicate to explain complex ideas to diverse groups, to debate arguments on complex matters, to teach, to negotiate, and to resolve conflict in a variety of situations. Discourse is fluent and "natural" (native-like in phrasing). Language is complex, accurate, and flexible in the manipulation of structure of information in clauses to express emphasis, comment, attitude. Content, organization, format, delivery, tone, and conversational style of discussion or presentation are appropriate to purpose and audience.

B. An overview of Listening Benchmarks: Global performance descriptors

B.1 Learner can understand a very limited number of common individual words and simple phrases in a predictable context and on everyday personal topics. Can follow greetings. Can follow simple instructions, which depend on "reading" gestures and other contextual clues; struggles to understand other instructions. Needs extensive assistance (e.g., speech modification, explanation, demonstration, translation).

B.2 Learner can understand a limited number of individual words, simple phrases, and simple short sentences within topics of immediate personal relevance, and when spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions. Can follow simple personal information questions and simple commands or directions related to the immediate context. Struggles to understand simple instructions without clear contextual clues. Needs considerable assistance (e.g., speech modification, explanation, demonstration, translation).

B.3 Learner can understand key words, formulaic phrases, and most short sentences in simple, predictable conversations on topics of immediate personal relevance, when spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions. Can follow questions related to personal experience and an expanded range of common daily instructions, positive and negative commands, and requests related to the immediate context. Frequently needs assistance (e.g., speech modification, explanation, demonstration).

B.4 Learner can follow, although with considerable effort, simple formal and informal conversations and other listening texts/discourse on topics of immediate personal relevance and at a slower than normal rate of speech. Can recognize many topics by familiar words and phrases. Can follow simple, short, direct questions related to personal experience and general knowledge. Can understand many common everyday instructions and directions related to the immediate context. Can follow simple, short, predictable phone messages. Needs a little assistance (e.g., speech modification or explanation). Often requests repetition.

B.5 Learner can follow very broadly and with some effort the gist of oral discourse in moderately demanding contexts of language use (face-to-face formal and informal conversations, audio tapes and radio broadcasts) on everyday, personally relevant topics, with clear articulation and at a slightly slower rate of speech. Can understand simple exchanges; contextualized short sets of common daily instructions and directions; direct questions about personal experience and familiar topics; routine (simple, repetitive, predictable) media announcements. Can understand a range of common vocabulary and a very limited number of idioms. Often requests repetitions. Can follow simple, short, predictable phone messages, but has limited ability to understand on the phone.

B.6 Learner can follow the gist (main ideas) and identify key words and important details in oral discourse in moderately demanding contexts of language use (face-to-face formal and informal conversations, audio tapes and radio broadcasts) on everyday topics and at a slower rate of speech. Can understand a range of common vocabulary and a limited number of idioms. Can follow contextualized discourse related to common experience and general knowledge. Can understand contextualized, short sets of instructions and directions. May still frequently request repetition. Can follow simple, short, predictable phone messages.

B.7 Learner can comprehend main points and most important details in oral discourse in moderately demanding contexts of language use. Can follow most formal and informal conversations on familiar topics at a descriptive level, at a normal rate of speech, especially as a participant. Can understand an expanded inventory of concrete and idiomatic language. Can understand more complex indirect questions about personal experience, familiar topics, and general knowledge. Sometimes requires slower speech, repetitions, and re-wording. Can understand routine work-related conversation. Can follow short, predictable phone messages on familiar matters; has problems following unknown details on unfamiliar matters. Has difficulty following a faster conversation between native speakers.

B.8 Learner can comprehend main points, details, speaker's purpose, attitudes, levels of formality, and styles in oral discourse in moderately demanding contexts of language use. Can follow most formal and informal general conversations, and some technical, work-related discourse in own field at an average rate of speech. Can follow discourse about abstract and complex ideas on a familiar topic. Can comprehend an expanded range of concrete, abstract, and conceptual language. Can determine mood, attitudes, and feelings. Can understand sufficient vocabulary, idioms, and colloquial expressions to follow detailed stories of general popular interest. Can follow clear and coherent extended instructional texts and directions. Can follow clear and coherent phone messages on unfamiliar and non-routine matters. Often has difficulty following rapid, colloquial/idiomatic, or regionally accented speech between native speakers.

B.9 Learner can obtain key information for important tasks (work, academic, personal) by listening to 15- to 30-minute complex authentic exchanges and presentations in some demanding contexts of language use. Can follow a broad variety of general interest and technical topics in own field, including unfamiliar topics on abstract conceptual or technical matters, when discourse has clear organizational structure and clear discourse transition signals, and is delivered in a familiar accent. Sufficiently grasps the meaning to paraphrase or summarize key points and important details. Sometimes may miss some details or transition signals and becomes temporarily lost. Often has difficulty with interpreting verbal humour, low-frequency idioms, and cultural references. Can infer speaker's bias and purpose, and some other attitudinal and socio-cultural information.

B.10 Learner can obtain complex detailed information, ideas, and opinions needed for important tasks (work, academic, personal) from multiple sources by listening to 30- to 60-minute complex authentic exchanges and presentations in demanding contexts of language use. Can follow formal and informal discourse on most general interest and technical topics in own field, delivered at various rates of speech. Only occasionally misses a topic shift or another transition. Can understand a broad range of factual, persuasive, and expressive oral language in various contexts. Sometimes has difficulty with interpreting culturally-embedded verbal humour, especially when spoken at a rapid rate or with unfamiliar accent. Can infer much unspoken attitudinal and socio-cultural information and can critically evaluate selected aspects of oral discourse.

B.11 Learner can obtain complex detailed information, ideas, and opinions needed for complex tasks (work, academic, personal) by listening to extensive (over an hour in length) complex authentic exchanges and presentations in demanding contexts of language use. Can follow most formal and informal general interest conversations and academic and professional presentations on unknown topics by unfamiliar speakers with a variety of accents. Has only occasional difficulty with Canadian cultural references, figurative, symbolic and idiomatic language, irony, sarcasm, or verbal humour. Can infer most of the unstated information (between the lines or outside-of-text knowledge) and can critically evaluate various aspects of oral discourse. Has adequate listening/interpreting skills to satisfy most academic and work-related expectations for competent communication.

B.12 Learner can competently and fluently interpret all spoken discourse, formal and informal, general and technical, in own field of study or work, in a broad variety of demanding contexts, live and audio/video recorded. Can follow long stretches of oral discourse, monologic or multi-speaker exchanges, with complex abstract and conceptual language, to obtain complex, detailed, and specialized information for complex tasks (professional and academic). Can get most, if not all, stated and unstated information, Canadian cultural references; figurative, symbolic, and idiomatic language; irony; sarcasm; verbal humour. Can critically evaluate most aspects of oral discourse. Has adequate listening/interpreting skills to satisfy all academic and work-related expectations for competent understanding of communication.

C. An overview of Reading Benchmarks: Global performance descriptors

B.1 Learner is literate in the same alphabet in another language, but has minimal understanding of written text in English. Shows little word sight recognition, except for a small number of familiar words and simple phrases in predictable contexts, related to immediate needs. Limited knowledge of language and limited exposure to sound-symbol relationship and spelling conventions in English limit learner's ability to decode unfamiliar words. Can match simple illustrations and short written sentences containing some familiar words.

B.2 Learner can read personal and place names, common and familiar public signs, and other short texts with familiar words and simple phrases in predictable contexts, related to immediate needs. Limited knowledge of the English language limits learner's ability to decode unfamiliar words. Can find a specific piece of information in a simple text, mostly in simple formatted text with clear layout.

B.3 Learner's understanding of written text is expanding with her/his knowledge of the language and with improving awareness of the sound-symbol relationship and spelling conventions in English. Can phonetically decode familiar and some unfamiliar words. Can read a simple paragraph within a familiar, predictable context of daily life and experience: simple narratives of routine events (e.g., stories written and read in class); descriptive prose about people, places, and things; a set of simple instructions. Can find specific detailed information in plain language texts with clear layout (e.g., in very short news items; weather forecasts; sales promotion coupons and flyers).

B.4 Learner is able to read a simple 2- to 3-paragraph text within a mostly familiar, mostly predictable context of daily life and experience: simple narrative, biographical, or descriptive prose; set of simple instructions; plain language news items; classified ads; sales promotion coupons, and flyers. Can locate, compare, and contrast one or more specific pieces of information in larger texts. Is able to use low-level inference and to tolerate some ambiguity (e.g., when guessing the meaning of the unknown words in the text). Uses a bilingual dictionary almost constantly. Reads in English for information, to learn the language, and to develop reading skills. Can read silently for meaning, usually with little visible or audible vocalization efforts, but reads slowly.

B.5 Learner can understand the purpose, main ideas, and some detail in some authentic 2- to 3-paragraph texts in moderately demanding contexts of language use. Can find specific, detailed information in prose texts, and in charts and schedules (e.g., transit timetables). Can get specific details from everyday routine texts, such as a set of instructions, plain language news items, and a notice from the gas company. Language of the text is mostly concrete and factual, with some abstract, conceptual, and technical vocabulary items, and may require low-level inference to comprehend it. Learner often needs to re-read and clarify. Occasionally learner can guess successfully the meaning of an unknown word, phrase, or idiom from context without a dictionary. Generally still uses a bilingual dictionary regularly; begins to use a concise unilingual ESL/EFL dictionary.

B.6 Learner can follow main ideas, key words and important details in a one-page (3 to 5 paragraphs) plain language authentic prose and non-prose (formatted) text in moderately demanding contexts of language use. Can locate 2 to 3 pieces of specific, detailed information in prose passages, charts, and schedules for analysis, comparison, and contrast. Can read printed or legible handwritten notes, memos, letters, schedules, and itineraries. Can get new information about familiar topics from reading mostly factual texts with clear organization, and within familiar background knowledge and experience. Language of the text is mostly concrete and factual, with some abstract, conceptual, and technical vocabulary items, and may require low-level inference to comprehend it (e.g., learner may guess some new words by recognition of prefixes and suffixes). Uses a concise unilingual ESL/EFL learner dictionary regularly.

B.7 Learner can follow main ideas, key words, and important details in an authentic 1- to 2-page text on a familiar topic within a predictable, practical, and relevant context. Can locate and integrate, or compare/contrast 2 to 3 specific pieces of information in visually complex texts (tables, calendars, course schedules, phone directories, almanacs, cookbooks) or across paragraphs or sections of text. Language is both concrete and abstract, conceptual and technical. Text contains facts and opinion; some information is explicit, and some is implied. Low-level inference is required in comprehending the text. Linguistic and stylistic means of expression in some texts can be complex in range and demanding to follow. Learner uses a unilingual dictionary when reading for confirmation/precision in interpretation. Reads in English for information, to learn the language, and to develop reading skills, but also begins to read easy fiction (short popular novels, stories) for pleasure.

B.8 Learner can follow main ideas, key words, and important details in an authentic 2- to 3-page text on a familiar topic, but within an only partially predictable context. May read popular newspaper and magazine articles and popular easy fiction, as well as academic and business materials. Can extract relevant points, but often requires clarification of idioms and of various cultural references. Can locate and integrate several specific pieces of information in visually complex texts (tables, directories) or across paragraphs or sections of text. Text can be on abstract, conceptual,, or technical topics, containing facts, attitudes, and opinions. Inference may be required to identify the writer's bias and the purpose/function of the text. Learner reads in English for information, to learn the language, to develop reading skills. Uses a unilingual dictionary when reading for precision vocabulary building.

B.9 Learner can read authentic multi-purpose texts: daily newspaper items, short stories, and popular novels; academic materials, sections of textbooks, manuals; routine business bulletins, letters, and documents. Reads in English for ideas and opinions, to find general information and specific details, to learn content areas, to learn the language, to develop reading skills, and for pleasure. Texts are 3 to 5 pages long, propositionally and linguistically complex, but with clear underlying structure, on abstract, conceptual, or technical topics. Some topics may be only partially familiar, or unfamiliar, but are relevant for the learner. In processing text, learner follows a range of cohesion clues across sentences and paragraphs. Can identify writer's bias and the purpose/function of text. Can use inference to locate and integrate several specific pieces of abstract information across paragraphs or sections of visually complex or dense text. Can sufficiently grasp the meaning of text to paraphrase or summarize key points. Often has difficulty with low-frequency idioms and cultural references.

B.10 Learner can read authentic multi-purpose texts, including complex charts, tables, forms, articles, fiction, letters, research papers, and manuals. Reads mostly to obtain general and specific information, ideas and opinions, and to learn content areas for work and study tasks. Texts are dense (packed with information), 5 to 10 pages long, on abstract, conceptual, technical, or literary topics, and may be complex (visually, propositionally/cognitively, and linguistically; sentence and discourse structures; thematic structure of information; style). Topics may be new and unfamiliar for the learner. Learner can search through complex displays of information and can use high-level inference to locate and integrate several specific pieces of abstract information (explicit and implied) from various parts of text. Can paraphrase or summarize key points and draw conclusions. Sometimes encounters difficulty interpreting low-frequency idioms and cultural references.

B.11 Learner can read a variety of authentic texts in all styles and forms, including technical literature in own field. Reads in English for ideas and opinions, for general information and specific details, to conduct business, to learn and research content areas, and for pleasure. Texts may be over 30 pages long; dense with information, on abstract, conceptual or technical topics, and may be complex visually, propositionally, and linguistically. Topics may be new/unfamiliar. Learner can search through complex displays of information, including computer screens and graphics and using background and specialized knowledge. Can locate and identify information through multi-feature matching and high-level inferences in the presence of multiple distracting details. Can synthesize and evaluate various pieces of abstract information (explicit and implied) across different texts. Can identify register and style nuances. Can evaluate attitude and opinion. Occasionally encounters difficulty interpreting low-frequency idioms and cultural references.

B.12 Learner can read a full variety of general and literary texts, and specialized or technical (academic and professional) texts in own field. Can get information, ideas and opinions on familiar and unfamiliar abstract and conceptual topics from propositionally, linguistically, stylistically, and culturally complex texts in demanding contexts of study and work. Can read critically and with appreciation for aesthetic qualities of text, register, stylistic and rhetorical nuance, tone (e.g., humour, irony, sarcasm), genre awareness, writer's bias, and point of view. Can understand almost all idiomatic and figurative language, and socio-cultural references. Can search through complex displays of information, and use high-level inferences, extensive background, and specialized knowledge to locate and integrate multiple specific pieces of abstract information across various multiple complex and dense texts. Can interpret, compare, and evaluate both the content and the form of written text. Reads fluently and accurately, adjusting speed and strategies to task.

D. An overview of Writing Benchmarks: Global performance descriptors

B.1 Learner is literate in the same alphabet in another language: writes all letters of the alphabet, and all numbers and numerals. Can write down basic personal identification information. Can copy/record time.

addresses, names, numbers, and prices. Can write a small number of familiar words, simple phrases and sentences about self and related to immediate needs. Limited knowledge of language and a limited exposure to sound-symbol relationship and spelling conventions in English limit learner's ability to write down (encode) unfamiliar words.

B.2 Learner can write a few sentences and phrases about self and family or other highly familiar information as a simple description, as answers to written questions, or on simplified forms. Can copy basic factual information from directories and schedules. Limited knowledge of language and a limited exposure to sound-symbol relationship and spelling conventions in English limit learner's ability to write down (encode) unfamiliar words.

B.3 Learner demonstrates adequate competence in simple, familiar, personal writing tasks within predictable contexts of everyday needs and experience. Can write a number of one-clause sentences about self and family (simple descriptions and narration). Can copy or write down a set of simple instructions or a simple message. Can fill out simple application forms and bank slips.

B.4 Learner can effectively convey in writing simple ideas and information about personal experience within predictable contexts of everyday needs. Can write simple descriptions and narration of events, stories, plans about self and family, or other highly familiar topics. Can write short messages: postcards, notes, directions, and letters. Can fill out simple application forms. Can copy information from dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and manuals. Can take a slow, simple dictation with frequent repetitions. Shows ability to successfully use one-clause sentences or coordinated clauses with basic tenses.

B. 5 Learner demonstrates initial ability in performing moderately complex writing tasks. Can effectively convey an idea, opinion, feeling, or experience in a simple paragraph. Can write short letters and notes on a familiar topic. Can fill out extended application forms. Can take a simple dictation with occasional repetitions at a slow-to-normal rate of speech. Can reproduce in writing simple information received orally or visually. Can write down everyday phone messages. Can complete a short routine report (usually on a form) on a familiar topic. Demonstrates better control over writing when reproducing information (e.g., writing down notes, messages, and paraphrasing); when creating own text, learner's linguistic means of expression remain simple, with frequent difficulty with complex structures and awkward-sounding phrases (unusual or "unnatural" word combinations).

B.6 Learner demonstrates developing ability in performing moderately complex writing tasks. Can effectively convey familiar information in familiar standard formats. Can write 1- to 2-paragraph letters and compositions. Can fill out detailed job application forms with short comments on previous experience, abilities, and strengths, and form reports. Can reproduce information received orally or visually, and can take simple notes from short oral presentations or from reference materials. Can convey information from a table, graph, or chart in a coherent paragraph. Can write down everyday phone messages. Demonstrates good control over simple structures, but has difficulty with some complex structures and produces some awkward sounding phrases (word combinations).

B.7 Learner demonstrates adequate ability in performing moderately complex writing tasks. Can write personal letters and simple routine business letters. Can construct coherent paragraphs on familiar concrete topics, with clear main ideas and some supporting details, and with a developing sense of audience. Can join two or three paragraphs into a larger text. Demonstrates mostly satisfactory control over complex structures, spelling, and mechanics. Text structure beyond a paragraph may sometimes seem foreign to an English-speaking reader: learner often produces written discourse patterns typical for his/her first language. Can take notes from clear pre-recorded phone messages and oral presentations. A more personal, creative expression in writing may reveal the use of "over-elaboration", literal translation, false cognates, circumlocution - strategies to express oneself more fully in view of still limited language skills.

B.8 Learner demonstrates fluent ability in performing moderately complex writing tasks. Can link sentences and paragraphs (3 to 4) to form coherent texts to express ideas on familiar abstract topics, with some support for main ideas, and with an appropriate sense of audience. Can write routine business letters (e.g., letters of inquiry, cover letters for application) and personal and formal social messages. Can write down a set of simple instructions, based on clear oral communication or simple, written, procedural text of greater length. Can fill out complex formatted documents. Can extract key information and relevant detail from a one-page text, and write an outline or a one-paragraph summary. Demonstrates good control over common sentence patterns, coordination, subordination, spelling, and mechanics. Has an occasional difficulty with complex structures (e.g., those reflecting cause and reason, purpose, comment), with naturalness of phrases and expressions, with organization, and with style.

B.9 Learner can write formal and informal texts needed for complex routine tasks in some demanding contexts of language use (business/work, academic, or social). Writes to offer and request information, clarification, confirmation, agreement/commitment, and to express feelings, opinions, and ideas to mostly familiar and sometimes unfamiliar readers. Can reproduce complex ideas from multiple sources (e.g., from written texts, routine meetings, lectures) as functional notes, outlines, or summaries. Can write faxes, memos, e-mails, formal letters, and informal reports. Can write a coherent essay, paper or report (5 double-spaced typed pages; descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative/persuasive) in order to present information and state a position on a previously researched topic. Demonstrates good control of complex structures (e.g., those reflecting logical relations of consequence) and adequate organization, but flexibility of tone and style is limited. Grammatical errors (e.g., in article use) and errors in word combinations (phrases, collocations, and idioms) still occur. Can effectively proofread and revise own text with occasional input from others.

B. 10 Learner can write formal texts needed for complex routine tasks in many demanding contexts of language use (business/work, academic, social). Writes to inform, express opinions and ideas, communicate solutions and decisions, present and debate an argument, or persuade familiar and unfamiliar audience. Can reproduce complex extensive information and ideas from multiple sources as an accurate outline and a summary/abstract of a desired length and detail level for other people or own use. Can take notes and write minutes/records of complex meetings (at work, at conferences or symposia). Can write technical, commercial, organisational, or academic messages as letters, faxes, memos, e-mails, and short formal reports. Can fill out and construct complex forms and other formatted documents. Can write an effective, stylistically complex, and interesting essay, story, paper, or report (10 double-spaced typed pages) about a previously researched topic. Demonstrates good control of grammar, vocabulary, and general organization, but flexibility in tone and style is still limited. Occasional grammatical errors (e.g., in article use) and some errors in phrases, collocations, and idioms still occur. Proofreads and revises own and others' texts, with occasional input from others.

B.11 Learner writes formal texts needed for complex, non-routine tasks in demanding contexts of language use (business/work, academic). Writes complex, original, formal texts to inform, recommend, critique/evaluate ideas and information, present and debate complex arguments, or to persuade a mostly unfamiliar audience. Synthesizes extensive complex information and ideas from multiple sources as a coherent whole (e.g., as a summary /abstract of desired length and detail level) for other people's use. Writes technical texts, informational and sales/promotional brochures, advertisements and instructions, formal reports, and short proposals. Completes very complex financial forms, legal documents, and other materials. Constructs complex forms and other formatted documents (e.g., questionnaires). Writes an effective, stylistically complex, and interesting sizable text (up to 20 double-spaced typed pages); expository or argumentative essay; symbolic or allegorical story; rational inquiry paper; problem-solution paper, or analytic report about a previously researched topic. Demonstrates very good control of grammar, vocabulary, organization, and flexibility in tone and style. Occasional errors are minimal. Can proofread, revise, and edit own and others' texts, using own resources.

B.12 Learner can write complex, original, formal texts needed for very complex, technical, or specialized tasks in demanding contexts of language use. Texts are often for public consumption and for various purposes: reporting, projecting, evaluating, promoting, expounding an argument, or appealing to an unfamiliar audience. Can synthesize and evaluate extensive complex information and ideas from multiple sources as a coherent whole (e.g., as an evaluative report of desired length and detail level). Can take notes/write minutes and commentaries at symposia, public/stakeholders' meetings, and consultations on complex topics. Can write highly specialized, complex external correspondence, proposals, news releases, formal and public reports, publication reviews. Can write highly specialized internal documents (e.g., procedures, policy manuals). Can develop innovative complex forms and other formats of information display. Can produce effective and stylistically polished essays, documents, articles, theses (over 20 double-spaced typed pages or other volume, appropriate to purpose and audience). Demonstrates excellent control over grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, thematization, organization, tone and style; errors are rare and minimal. Can effectively proofread, revise, and edit all aspects of texts, using own resources.

GLOSSARY

ability (language)
Language ability has long been understood by teachers and testers as consisting of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing), and additional components such as: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. According to Bachman and Palmer, language ability is a theoretical construct, which consists of language competence (otherwise called language knowledge) and strategic competence (a set of strategies). This combination provides language users with the ability, or capacity, to create and interpret discourse. (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 67)

abilities (language/communication)
Abilities are sometimes referred to as skills but many researchers make a distinction. Widdowson (1978) sees language abilities as more than language skills. Abilities refer to language use, communication,

language function, and discourse interpretation. They lie in the sphere of discourse and pragmatics (socio-cultural and functional interpretation of context and intent). They involve interpreting, the highest skill in language processing. Language skills, on the other hand, refer to usage (reference knowledge), and lie in the sphere of text, formal manipulation, and organizational knowledge of language (grammar, text cohesion and rhetorical organization). Thus, language abilities (communication abilities) are built on the foundation of language skills, and apply in situations of language use.

adjacency pair
Two utterances, each by a different speaker, which typically occur together in a sequence in a conversation. Example: Question-Answer. Adjacency pairs are considered the basic two-part building block structure of interpersonal exchange. An example of adjacency pair is: Offer-Acceptance (preferred response) or Offer-Refusal (dispreferred response).

adjuncts
Adjuncts are usually (but not always) optional elements in a clause and may be freely added to any clause. Their function is to say more about the circumstances (time, place, position, direction, manner, cause, etc.), or to comment on the statement as in this example: *Luckily, he was not hurt.* Normally, however, adjuncts appear at the end of clause, as in the following formula: Subject + Verb + Object + Complement + Adjunct (S+V+O+C+A). The adjunct function is performed by an adverb, adverb phrase, prepositional phrase, or a noun phrase. (e.g., *He walked very rapidly; She sat on the floor; I'll do it my way*; *I walked ten miles that day*.). Adjuncts can be put first, for emphasis (e.g., A*t ten fifteen he left the building*.). Adjunct may also refer to a compound subject, verb or object within a sentence. (e.g., *John and Mary laughed. The moon waxes and wanes. They bought food and clothing*.). Sentence adjuncts apply to a whole clause (not just parts of it) and may be used to introduce a comment or reinforcement of idea. They are sometimes called linking adjuncts (e.g., *moreover, besides*.).

anaphora
A relationship of reference between an expression in the text and its mention previously in the text. We understand *what* or *whom* the expression refers to by connecting it to the previous mention. (e.g., ***John*** *came in yesterday... I smiled at* ***him****.)*. The initial expression to identify the referent is called antecedent; the expression used later is called an anaphor. Anaphors are typically pronouns.

antecedent of anaphoric reference
See above.

approximative system
(See *interlanguage* and *learner language*.)

argumentation patterns
As in: providing supporting evidence; affirming, denying, objecting to, agreeing with, justifying, etc.

argumentative prose
Writing that tries to argue a point, persuade or convince.

assessment
Often used interchangeably with evaluation. However, in its stricter sense, while evaluation focuses on the past (what has occurred and how it happened), assessment focuses on the present and the future (what is or what should be). Language assessment is often used instead of the term 'language testing', both for purposes of placement (placing learners in appropriate programs) or achievement (assessing learner outcomes against program objectives). Assessment in social sciences is related to the concepts of competency models and minimum standards.

avoidance
A strategy by which learners are likely to avoid using language structures, words and expressions which they find difficult. As a result, such language items may be under-represented in the learner's speech and writing as compared to typical use.

basic word order
The typical position of the elements in a clause. In a declarative English sentence (statement), the basic word order is Subject + Verb, (e.g., *She is sleeping*.). It can be extended to: Subject + Verb + Object (e.g., *She likes tapioca.*) or all the way to the following pattern: Subject + Verb + Object + Complement + Adjunct (S+V+O+C+A). (e.g., *The boy (S) wiped (V) the table (O) clean (C) in a hurry (A).).*
(See also: adjunct, clause, complement, compound sentence, and complex structures.)

basic tenses
Verbs in the simple present, simple past, simple future tenses and in the continuous aspect.

Benchmark
A reference point: a statement describing what a person can do in English as a second language at a given level of communicative proficiency in four competency areas (social interaction, instructions, suasion, information).

bias for best
The notion that assessment content (kinds of tasks, number of tasks) and procedures (e.g., supportive approach in an oral interview) should be geared toward helping learners to demonstrate their highest level of proficiency in performance.

bottom-up processing
Interpreting information beginning at the lowest level of language units (sounds, letters, words), then proceeding upwards to gain overall meaning. In reading, it means moving from words and expressions to sentences, to paragraphs, and, finally, to whole texts. In listening, it means moving from words and expressions to thought groups/information units, to whole utterances, conversations, or presentations (e.g., lectures).

cataphora

A relationship of reference between an expression in the text used to introduce someone or something and its mention *subsequently* in the text that identifies the referent more fully. The meaning of *what* or *who* the expression refers to becomes apparent after we hear or see it for the second time. (e.g., ***It** slowly emerged from behind the hill. **A beautiful city** was lying peacefully in front of us in a green valley.*).

clause

A group of words containing a verb. A syntactic unit composed of words or groups of words (phrases). Words or phrases fulfil five possible functions in English clause structure: subject, verb, object, complement, and adjunct. (See adjunct, complement, compound sentence, complex structures, and sentence.)

cleft structures

A method used to emphasize one part of the sentence. (e.g., Instead of saying *they needed money*, we could say *It was money they needed.*) Cleft structures are instruments for thematization of information, depending on one's purpose in presenting theme and rheme, given and new information, and emphasis in the text. (See structure of information, thematization, preface, prefacing structures, focus/focusing signals).

coherence, coherent

The familiar, expected, logical connectedness in common experience. In discourse or text, coherence means a logical sequence of development of ideas, argument, and exchanges; the perceived quality of meaning, unity and purpose. (Cook, 1989, p. 156)

cohesion of text

Connection between elements of text achieved by grammatical reference within and between clauses, by words which are semantically related and by signalling organization patterns such as classification, comparison, contrast, analogy, cause and effect.

cohesion (grammatical)

Achieved by features such as reference, ellipsis, adverbials of time and space, coordination, and subordination of clauses expressing logical relations of meaning between them, such as contrast (but, however...); time (afterwards), condition (if), etc. Some linguists distinguish in this class **rhetorical cohesion:** signals of thematic (rhetorical) and logical organization in the text, such as markers of sequence (first, second, next.), reinforcement (besides, furthermore), explanation (e.g., *consequently),* transition, reformulation, summary, generalization or conclusion.

cohesion (lexical)

Connectivity of text achieved by repetition, synonyms, antonyms, word-derivation, semantically related words (sets) in the text. (e.g., *The birth was easy. The baby is in good health. The mother too.*).

collocation/collocability

Regular patterns of linear co-occurrence of words side by side in a given stylistic context; acceptability in a linear combination in a phrase or clause, next to other words. (e.g., *strong* and *powerful* are near-synonyms but cannot always be exchanged freely in a sentence; each has different collocability. For example, "strong" collocates with "tea" and "table" but not with "car", whereas "powerful" collocates with "car", but not with "tea" or "table". (Halliday, 1976). Knowledge of collocations is part of the mastery of a language.

communication

Communication is a social activity, which consists of verbal and non-verbal signals; both systems are learned, automatically produced and coordinated with each other. (Gumperz, 1982). Communication has two universal aims: to cooperate and to maintain social relations. Successful communication is the reception and creation of coherent discourse, due to the ability to infer the function of what is said in view of its form and context. Essential for successful communication is the assessment of the extent of the shared knowledge between the participants. Successful communication should give us new information but within the comfort zone of the shared framework of reference. (Cook, 1989).

communicative language teaching (CLT)

An approach to teaching which emphasizes the communication of meaning and the process of communication over the practice and manipulation of language forms.

communication strategies

Strategies used by speakers to overcome problems in communication resulting from limited linguistic resources or inability to access them. Both native speakers and L2 learners use such strategies. (See compensatory strategies)

communicative competence

Competence to communicate; knowledge of the language; knowledge (conscious and formalized or not) of rules for comprehension and production of correct and appropriate language and discourse; a complex system of rules operating simultaneously at many levels that determine the choice and organization of grammatical forms for communication and other language functions; underlying ability to perform language functions; mastery of the use of language; the ability to utilize language effectively in a given language community.

In the theoretical framework of CLB, communicative competence refers to organizational (linguistic and textual) language knowledge and pragmatic (functional and socio-cultural) language knowledge. When both organizational and pragmatic knowledge of language (communicative competence) are combined with the strategic component (strategic competence) in a situation of language use, the learner demonstrates communicative proficiency in performance.

communicative performance
The actual use of language in concrete situations to accomplish a communicative function or task demonstrates the degree of communicative proficiency through the application of language knowledge, skill and strategic rules.

compensatory strategies
Part of the learner's *interlanguage*; communication strategies; all systematic attempts by whatever means available to the learner to express and interpret meaning in the second language to compensate for the lack of the appropriate standard target language rules. Communication strategies include: mime, imitation, gesture, drawings, approximation, generalization, circumlocution, silence, avoidance, transfer from L1, over-elaboration.

competencies
They are descriptions of what the learner can accomplish at a given moment or at the end of the course of study. They are statements of intended outcome of learning (in competency-based instruction/training), applicable to a variety of specific contexts. They are demonstrations of the attainment of knowledge and skills by an individual learner in relevant contexts and situations. Competencies are observable, measurable behaviours, usually evaluated against specifically stated objectives, conditions and standards of performance (criterion-based). They are focussed on outcome product rather than on the training process itself. A competency can usually be broken into smaller components. (e.g., telephone use - receive incoming phone calls: answer the phone; direct the call; take a message). (See function/competency distinction; objectives; goals)

complement (grammatical structure)
A complement is an obligatory element in a clause and may not be removed from it without making it ungrammatical. Its function is to describe the subject. Complements are often and commonly used in description and identifying things. The complement function is performed by an adjective/adjective phrase, or a noun/noun phrase. There is a limited class of verbs associated with complements. Complements appear after such verbs (linking verbs), as in the following formula: Subject + Verb + Complement (S+V+C). (e.g., *Mary seems ill.; The coffee tasted bitter.* ("tasted" is a linking verb that connects the complement "bitter" to the subject "the coffee"). Complements also appear after the object, as in the following formula: Subject + Verb + Object + Complement + Adjunct (S+V+O+C+A). (e.g., *The boy (S) wiped (V) the table (O) clean (C) in a hurry (A).).* A complement may also express duration, distance, price or weight. (e.g., *The snow lasted all week.).*

complex structures (in sentences)
Structures consisting of one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses, including compound and compound-complex sentences. Examples of other complex structures: past perfect passive (*had been reminded*), future perfect passive (*will have been achieved*), perfect or past infinitives (*to be living, to have resigned, to have been forgotten*), various expansions of the noun group (e.g., relative clauses), cleft structures, subordinate adverbial clauses, and subordinating conjunctions.

compound (sentence)
Consists of two or more simple sentences, (independent clauses), linked together by a coordinating conjunction, punctuation, or both. (e.g., *The day was warm, the breeze was mild, and everyone had a good time.).*

conceptual meaning
The basic meaning of a word or text. Sometimes called primary, logical, denotative or cognitive meaning. (e.g., woman = adult human female.) Also, the meaning of notions (concepts) such as time, duration, cause and effect. (See also connotation and collocation)

conceptual language
Language related to concepts, opinions and ideas formed in the mind (conceptualized); language that deals with complex intellectual processing.

connotation, connotative meaning
Additional features and ideas (psychological, sociological, physical) beyond a purely conceptual definition that one may have when thinking about a word (e.g., *woman" adult human female* but also possibly "warm, compassionate, maternal" or "frail, feminine, attractive"). Words may also carry positive or negative connotations, which often are culturally bound.

consciousness- raising
A type of form-focussed instruction designed to make learners aware of formal features of a language and their accurate use in expressing meaning.

content words (lexical words)
Nouns (cat), verbs (sleeps), adjectives (soft) and adverbs (soundly), as opposed to function words (also called form words or grammatical words) such as conjunctions (and, but), articles (the, a), prepositions (at, to, of), pronouns (he, she). In English, content (lexical) words are usually emphasized (stressed), while function words are usually de-emphasized (reduced). Content words carry the main propositional meaning in a sentence. (See form/function words)

content-based instruction
Second-language instruction which centres on themes and topics (instead of language points) around the academic content areas (subjects, such as science, math, citizenship), or around vocational technical content areas (e.g., computer assembly or sales; warehousing and shipping; patient care).

context
The physical and socio-cultural world which surrounds and interacts with text in the creation of discourse. Context may include the physical situation of communicative interaction (language use setting), the participants (including their status and social roles) as well as background knowledge ("shared reality";

knowledge of the circumstances around the discourse, local knowledge, knowledge of the world, or specialized knowledge), which language users fall back on to interpret or create meaning in discourse through top-down processing.

cooperative principle
An assumption of all speakers that each participant in a conversation will do his/her best to contribute at the right time, in the right amount, and in appropriate style and format. Another set of assumptions believed to be in operation when interpreting discourse are Grice's four conversational maxims (Be true, Be brief, Be relevant, Be clear).

corrective feedback
Feedback to a learner that his/her language use is incorrect. It may include explicit or implicit error corrections, and may or may not contain metalinguistic information (e.g., *The verb should agree with the subject.*).

criterion, criterion-referenced
A standard by which something is judged. An individual's performance on a test or in performing a task is judged in terms of an explicitly predetermined standard (and not by comparison to the performance of others in the group). The criterion is the standard against which an individual's performance is measured in terms of his or her progress toward a specific objective and level of performance. For example, on a driving test, a minimum score must be achieved regardless of the performance of others. (See *norm, norm-referenced*)

curriculum
Principles and procedures for the planning, implementation, evaluation, and management of an educational program. Includes syllabus and methodology (the selection of learning tasks and activities). (Nunan, 1988, p. 158), (See *syllabus*)

deixis
A system of reference connections between the text and the situational context; a way of "pointing" through language to the space, its elements, time, by using personal, spatial, temporal and textual references. (e.g., *he, you; this, that; here, there; now, before).* Knowledge of deixis belongs to the textual component of communicative competence in the model adopted by the CLB 2000.

dense (text/density)
A text can be lexically dense, i.e., containing a high number of *lexical* words per *clause.* Lexically dense texts are packed with information since lexical (content) words carry propositional/semantic meaning. A text can also be dense with important details, such as figures, formulas, and other data..

descriptive prose
Writing that uses description techniques focussing on senses (space, colour, physical characteristics).

development (language)
Often used as a synonym for "acquisition" or "learning", or for both, without a specific focus on either one.

developmental sequences
The order in which certain features of language are acquired in language learning.

discourse
Meaningful, purposeful stretch of connected language; a functional text in context. Ideas combined into a series of utterances or sentences, cohesive in form, coherent in thought, carrying a specific intent, produced in a specific context, for a specific audience and for a specific purpose. (See *text*)

discourse analysis
The study of speech and writing in their contexts. Investigation of *the form* and *function* of what is said and written, from "oh" or "well" in casual talk, to the study of the dominant ideology in a culture as represented, for example, in its educational or political practices. (Yule 1996, p.83) Discourse analysis may view discourse as product. Samples of real discourse are collected, analyzed and presented as having a clear rank structure composed of smaller and smaller units (acts, moves, exchanges, transactions). Discourse analysis may also view discourse as process. Such analysis focuses on what happens when people talk. Its object is not finding an overall structure in the conversation but the process of how people manage conversation and participate in the interaction, and the smallest units emerging from it.

discourse exchange, interaction, turn
Two-way or multiple axis communication as opposed to the deliverance of speeches or information by one speaker to listeners. Implies active participation in communication. (See long turn, exchange)

discourse markers (signals)
Markers in spoken and written language to connect parts of text or discourse, and to signal shifts and changes in thought and ideas in the text. (e.g., *first, second, next, incidentally, in spite of all that, in summary, by the way, before I conclude).*

discourse type
A recognizable form of discourse. (e.g., *menu, chat, textbook).*

EFL (distinction between EFL and ESL)
Learning English as a Foreign Language means learning in a non-English-speaking environment. Example: a Japanese learner studying English in Japan would be studying EFL, whereas the same learner studying English in Edmonton, Vancouver or Halifax, especially in a long-term residency situation (e.g., as an immigrant) would be studying ESL. The focus of each instruction (EFL or ESL) is usually different, since students' needs and goals are different

ellipsis

Omitting words in a situation in which it is unnecessary to repeat them. This often occurs in conversations, in replies and questions. Example:

A: He drank only a few drops. He didn't like it.

B: He didn't? *(Like it)* I wouldn't either *(like it)*, I don't think. How about you? *(Would you like it? Did you like it?)*.

embedded (as in clauses)
Subordinate clauses within the report structure. (e.g., *He asked what time it was.*).

ESL
English-as-a-Second Language. English used by non-native speakers in an environment where English is the dominant language. (See *EFL*)

evaluation
Evaluation is often used interchangeably with assessment. However, in its stricter sense, while assessment focuses on the present and the future (what is or what should be), evaluation focuses on the past (what has occurred and how it happened). Evaluation is the collection and assessment of information for the purpose of decision-making. Evaluation can be formative and ongoing, or summative / final. There is no single set of acceptable procedures to follow, and a focus of the evaluation and the methods used change depending on who requests it and for what purpose. For example, an ESL program evaluation may be conducted on a number of levels including curriculum, teaching, learning outcomes and administration. Evaluation techniques include interviews, questionnaires, observation schedules, and tests.

exchange
Discourse (conversation) between two speakers consisting of two to three speaking turns.

exponent (of a function)
Surface element of language structure through which function or notion can be expressed. Possible exponent of a function "request permission" is: "*May I leave early?*"

expository prose
Writing which explores, explains, analyzes ideas, statements or generalizations (e.g., expository paragraph or essay).

face
A person's public self-image. A *face want* is the expectation of a person to have one's self-image respected. *Face threatening* and *face saving acts* are those verbal and other acts that threaten or avoid to threaten the person's public image. An important concept in communication, especially in social interaction.

false cognates/false friends

Words in L1 that seem to be identical in meaning with, or related etymologically and semantically to similar words in English; they look and sound similar. They may have been "borrowed" into both languages from another language, such as Latin, but they mean different things in the two languages. For example: *eventually* in English and *ewentualnie* in Polish, *sympathetic* in English and *simpatico* in Spanish. The learner uses the false cognate in English, not realizing that it is likely to confuse the listener.

feedback

(See corrective feedback.) Feedback helps learners test hypotheses they have formed about the grammatical system of the target language.

first language (mother tongue, native language)

The language one learns as a child or at which one becomes most proficient from an early age. (commonly abbreviated as *L1*.)

fluency

Fluency is generally understood as expression of thoughts and ideas with little hesitation in extended discourse (despite research findings that fluent native speakers *do* make numerous naturally occurring pauses in their speech). ESL learners are sometimes fluent speakers, but significant grammatical and pronunciation errors may still be present. Fluency can be seen as the maximally effective operation of the language system so far acquired by the student. (Brumfit, 1984) It seems to depend on access to memorized phrases and formulas: chunks of language available in a situation, as well as on developing automatization in carrying out language processing tasks. According to the cognitive information processing approach, fluency is the realization of performance, and will vary depending on the tension between meaning and form (accuracy, complexity), and possibly other task demands. (Skehan, 1998)

focus/focusing signals

(See cleft structures and structure of information.) A method of indicating emphasis, often by using adverbs or word order cues. (e.g., It *was from my mother that I first got the news. / I am particularly interested in planetary systems.).*

form, formal

The grammatical structures of a language.

form words (function words)

As opposed to *content (lexical)* words. Refers to articles, prepositions, and particles.

form-focussed instruction

Language instruction, which draws the learner's attention to the form and structure of the language, and focuses on grammatical accuracy in the context of communicative interaction.

formal instruction

Language learning in a formal setting; a second language classroom, where learners are given instruction and an opportunity to practice.

formal features
The formal features of a language are its grammatical elements, usually considered without context, as usage.

formality level
Required level of attention to strict rules, forms, customs and conventions. Refers to use of language, appropriate to a given situation/context.

formatted text
Standardized text; document with a specific pre-set graphic and textual format; display of information in a specific non-prose layout. (e.g., application forms, calendars, maps, tables, graphs, charts, diagrams, directories, and schematic plans).

formulas, formulaic patterns
Basic expressions learned as unanalysed "chunks" of text. (e.g., *"How are you?"*).

fossilization
A lack of change in ***interlanguage*** patterns, even after regular instruction, corrective feedback and prolonged exposure to the language; a prolonged learning plateau where there is seemingly no progress in the learner. (See Lightbown & Spada, p. 122) Usually refers to the grammar in learner language, which is often characterized as fragmented or reduced. (See simplification)

framework (CLB)
A proficiency framework is an overall structure, based on models of communicative proficiency (language ability), and relating descriptions of language use, language teaching, and language assessment. CLB is a framework of reference for adult ESL learning and ESL programming. Although it relates levels, curricula, and ESL programs, in itself it is not a curriculum. It is a set of descriptive statements about successive levels of achievement on the continuum of ESL performance. It is concerned with the issues of "what" (competencies) and "why" (theoretical foundations and research) but it does not comment on issues of methodology, the "how" of teaching, which is the domain of the curriculum, including the teacher.

frequent (vocabulary)
Words listed in the first thousand or second thousand in Nation's word list. (Nation, 1986)

fronting
See structure of information, cleft structures, thematization, preface, prefacing structures, and focus/ focusing signals.

function/competency (relationship between)
Examples of speech or text functions: express complaint, request, indicate agreement, indicate a problem, persuade. A competency is defined within a function by context and performance conditions as a performance outcome, an observable, measurable behaviour. (e.g., effectively and appropriately indicate a problem in communication by requesting repetition or clarification). (See macro-function, micro-function)

functional variation
Register; language varying according to the function it is to serve. Register depends on what activity is going on, who the participants are, and what role the language is playing (purpose to be achieved). For example, some situations require that written language be used; written language then is a functional variety (similarly as dialect is a social variety of language). (Halliday, p. 44)

genre
A type of text recognizable as such and as distinct from other genres by its format, content, structure, communicative purpose/function, style, and by its readers and their interests and expectations (audience to whom the type of text is "addressed"). Examples: recipe, letter of transmittal, riddle, prayer, lecture, advertisement, report, memo, novel, short story, editorial, comics strip.

genuine question
A question to which the person doing the asking does not know the answer in advance. This is in contrast to a *display question*, which can be used as a model for language learning. When the teacher points to a wall and asks, *"Is this a clock?"* she is using a display question. She is also using language not to communicate but in its heuristic function (to learn, to teach).

given-new information
Old and new information distribution in the text. What is already known ("given" or already known; old information) is placed first and followed by what is being introduced for the first time ("new" information). The pattern is: Given/**new,** Given/**new**, Given/**new,** as in the following example: Cross-country skiing / **requires the cooperation of all parts of the body**. Muscles and bones / **provide the support and power to the skiers**. (See thematization)

goals (of program/curriculum)
General statements of purpose. There are various kinds of goals, which emphasize different aspects of teaching and learning (e.g., proficiency-related; process-related; product-related goals).
(See objectives; competencies.)

hedge

Verbal behaviour to signal politeness, deference, and other socio-cultural considerations (*face-saving*) in the form of an additional cautionary note from the speaker or writer to inform the listener or reader how to interpret the utterance. Example: *"I may be mistaken, but it seems to me that..."*.

idiomatic (language, expressions)
Language where the meaning is derived by usage rather than the definition of individual words (e.g., *get over it; pick yourself up*; *once in a blue moon*.).

inflection
A change in the form of a word signalling change in tense/voice/person/number/gender/mood/case (e.g., *he/him, go/went*).

informal language learning setting
A setting in which the second language is learned naturally through informal interactions with native speakers (e.g., "on the job" or "in the streets").

information structure
The ordering of elements by the exploitation of grammatical options in accordance with the sender's perception of the receiver's existing knowledge. (Cook, p. 157)

informational text
The main purpose of which is to inform. (exchange and publicize knowledge, ideas, opinions, and factual information.) Examples: books, articles, research papers, reports, essays, brochures, notices.

instructional text
Text that teaches; a "how-to" text; handbooks, manuals.

intelligible/intelligibility
Comprehensible, easy or possible to understand and follow; understandable to another person. Intelligibility/comprehensibility are based not only on close adherence to the formal features of the language (lexical choices, grammaticality and pronunciation features) in speech, but also on other factors in the speaker-hearer situation (e.g., socio-psychological dimension).

interlanguage (learner language)
The learner's language, or rather its underlying grammar at a certain stage of development. A stage in language acquisition/development when a learner is between L1 and L2; an intermediate status between the grammar codes of the mother tongue and the target language. In the process of acquiring second language, a learner successively builds a series of interim systems, complete with their typical developmental "errors". Such a series is often referred to as an interlanguage continuum.

journalese

Terms, phrases and language used specifically in the realm of journalism; language register that is peculiar to that field.

L1
(See first language.)

L2
(See second language.)

language acquisition
Natural internal process of language development; building gramatical control and fluency in a language, getting the "feel" of how a language functions, with or without formal instruction, but necessarily through exposure and communicative interaction.

language learning
The conscious, step-by-step study of linguistic forms and other elements of language and language use.

learner language. (See interlanguage)

learning strategy
A behavioural or mental procedure used by the learner to understand and learn elements of language. Learning strategies are generally defined as operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval and use of information. Alternative terms that have been used for learning strategies are: techniques, conscious plans or operations, learning skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, processing strategies, problem-solving procedures, basic skills, thinking skills, thinking frames, reasoning skills, learning-to-learn skills. (Oxford, 1990, p. 238)

lexical words/content words
Nouns (cat), verbs (sleeps), adjectives (soft) and adverbs (soundly), as opposed to function words (also called form words or grammatical words) such as conjunctions (and, but), articles (the, a), prepositions (at, to, of), pronouns (he, she). In speech, lexical words are usually emphasized (stressed), while function words are usually de-emphasized (reduced). Lexical words carry the main propositional meaning in a sentence.

long turn
Opportunity to speak at length at some point in the conversation; an extended, unassisted, and logically whole or coherent fragment of connected speech of a monologue-type, which is a part of spoken interaction. Learners must be given opportunity to develop ability at long turns (e.g., to present a point, an argument, a report, a demonstration, etc.); they do not necessarily develop automatically through short-turn conversational interactions. (See discourse exchange, turn)

macro-function
One of general purposes of human language. The CLB adopts a classification of macro-functions by Bachman (1990) into the following four functions: **ideational** (referential: to exchange information, to share our experience of reality, knowledge and feelings); **manipulative** (to affect the world, to get things done, to maintain social cohesion); **heuristic** (to learn, think, teach, problem-solve, memorize); and **imaginative** (creative; to use language to enjoy and to create stories, poetry, jokes, imaginary realities).

macro-structure
High-level units within a discourse (e.g., moves, transactions) as opposed to low-level units (e.g., utterances and turns).

meta-linguistic awareness
The ability to treat language objectively (e.g., being able to define a word, or to explain why something is grammatically incorrect).

micro-function
A specific functional use of language (e.g., requesting help, telling time).

modal meaning / modality
Indicates, through the use of modal verbs, the attitude of the speaker to the hearer or to what is being said.

modals/modal verbs
A set of verbs used in an auxiliary role. They express requests, offers, suggestions; they are used to express something in a polite or tactful way (e.g. *Could you close the window? Should we go?).* Also used to indicate ability, possibility, likelihood, unacceptability and to refer to time in report structures.

monitoring
Observing, repairing or correcting one's own speech as it happens. Both native-speakers and learners instinctively (consciously or not) monitor their own vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Learners who are very concerned with grammatical accuracy seem to be over-monitoring, while others need additional help in the form of corrective feedback.

narrative prose
Writing which tells, reports, relates events; therefore linked to story-telling (e.g., stories, news reports).

native speaker

A person who acquired first or second language as a child or has been proficient in a language from an early age (e.g., a bilingual person). Native speakers have an instinctual feel for the subtleties of their native tongue (grammatical and lexical acceptability, colloquialisms, expressions, etc.).

negotiation of meaning

Interaction between speakers to establish a common understanding in the act of communication; the give-and-take between conversational partners. To this end, speakers make adjustments to their speech and seek and provide clarification whenever needed.

norm, norm-referenced

The degree to which an individual's performance on a test or in performing a task is judged relative to the performance of others in the group.

Objectives (program/curriculum)

Objectives are derived from goals. They are set before instruction to describe what we want a person to be able to do after they have had instruction. Objectives are intentions. Objectives guide the teaching/learning process and help to set curriculum. (See goals; competencies)

office

A sociological term; an appointed social position based on qualifications.

order of development

Used to refer to the order in which grammatical features are acquired in SLA.

outcomes

In the CLB framework, curriculum outcomes (end results) are related to curriculum / syllabus objectives (specific goals set in the beginning). Both are derived from the CLB standards. Outcomes are actual results measured against the initial objectives, and tell us what a person can do in accomplishing tasks in English at various Benchmark levels after participating in a CLB-based curriculum as a learner.

patterns

In SLA patterns are one type of formulaic speech. They are unanalysed units, which have one or more open slots (e.g., *"Can I have a ----?").* (Ellis 1985, p. 302) In descriptive grammar, they refer to verb patterns, syntax patterns for correct verb usage and clause construction (e.g., SV; SVA; SVC; SVO; SVOA; SVOO; SVOC). (See basic word order)

paralanguage

Body language; the use of the body, face, and voice qualities (e.g. pitch) in conveying information.

parallelism

Repetition of a form (linguistic structure) in a text; a way to create textual cohesion.

performance

Execution of language ability in a communicative task. According to the information processing approach, performance is realized through fluency, an outcome of tension between meaning and form (accuracy, complexity), and possibly other task demands. A task-based performance is evaluated on three major dimensions: fluency (often achieved through memorized and integrated language elements), accuracy (when learners try to use an interlanguage system of a particular level to produce correct, but possibly limited, language), and complexity (a willingness to take risks in using more complex forms even though they may not be completely correct). (Skehan, 1998, p. 5) (See *communicative performance*)

phatic language use

Personal interaction exchanges to open the channel of communication: greetings, ritual inquiries about health and news, comments about the weather; commonly referred to as "small talk".

politeness principle

Three maxims: Don't impose, Give options, Make your receiver feel good. (Cook, p. 157)

pragmatic language knowledge

The name given by Bachman (1990) to the functional and sociolinguistic components of communicative competence. Pragmatic language knowledge enables language users to relate utterances and texts to their pragmatic meaning in a specific context. Example: *"I'm a bit cold. Aren't you?"* may mean, among other things: "*I am asking for permission to close the window*" or "*I am suggesting we go indoors*."

pragmatic interpretation of language

How people create meaning and make sense of what is said in specific circumstances by connecting language form and language function.

pragmatics

The study of meaning in discourse, beyond the semantic meaning of words referring to the external world and the truth of the sentences (propositions). Principles of relating stretches of language to the physical, social and psychological situation in which they take place in order to interpret the development of meaning at a given point in discourse. Pragmatics examines "how meaning develops at a given point" in discourse. (Cook, 1989, p. 44)

pragmatics of discourse

Exploring what the speaker or writer has in mind; going beyond the primary social concerns of interaction and conversation analysis, looking behind the forms and structures in the text "to psychological concepts such as background knowledge, beliefs, and expectations." (Yule, 1996)

preface, prefacing structures

Structures (together with prosodic features) which point forward to what is going to be said. (e.g. *The answer is location, location, and, location.).*

procedural text
Type of instructional text: provides directions, instructions and procedures to follow (e.g. policy manuals).

production strategies
Refer to the utilization of linguistic knowledge in communication. Used by every speaker. They differ from "communication strategies" (e.g., compensatory strategies) in that they do not imply any communication problems.

productive features (of a language)
In English almost any noun can modify almost any other noun: *steam power, power steam, steam train, power train, train power*, etc. The speaker immediately looks for interpretation that makes sense. Some other productive patterns in English are illustrated in the following examples: 1. *From a... (adjective) point of view;* 2. *in terms of.........(noun);* 4. *in....(adjective) terms;* 5*...(noun)- wise*. Such features can be exploited by language users to produce new combinations, which, although novel, will be readily understood by others.

proficiency (communicative)
Degree of skill in communication measured without reference to a particular curriculum. (Oxford p.237) It includes: 1. communicative competence / language ability (organizational and pragmatic language competence, or what the learner knows, and strategic competence activated in a situation of language use), and 2. performance, which is observable and measurable. (Bachman, 1990; Savignon, 1972)

proposition
A simple declarative sentence.

prose
Written text in its usual form (not poetry or standardized/formatted text).

reduction, reduced (meaning, structures)
The process of sacrificing parts of the originally intended meaning or elimination of certain formal elements of structure for the sake of increasing fluency, gaining time or being able to maintain communication at all. Learner may do it deliberately or subconsciously, giving importance to key (mostly lexical) elements only, and leaving out some function elements, without sacrificing the intended meaning (formal reduction). (e.g., *The children very happy.)*. (See *redundancy*)

redundancy, redundant elements
From “information theory”: if the transmitted signals in communication were limited to essential, non-redundant elements only, a loss of one of the elements could obliterate the meaning. Therefore, in any communication system, including a human language, there must be a certain amount of redundancy to ensure successful communication through any channel, with its "noise" and distortion (e.g. phone). A typical "redundant" element in the English language is the singular third person morpheme on the simple present tense verb. Without it, the meaning is still perfectly clear: *He go to school every day.* (See simplification, fossilization)

reference in text
Using an expression to identify or help identify someone or something. Relationship that holds between an expression and what that expression stands for in relation to the external world. Relationship between elements of text that point to the same external world "referents" or subjects of discourse, and, therefore, to each other. (e.g., *John, he, it, the bigger one on the left, such cases*). (See anaphora and cataphora, referring expression, deixis)

referring expression
An expression whose meaning can only be understood by referring to other parts of the discourse.
(See anaphora and cataphora)

register
A functional variety of language, conditioned by social context; form of language that is customarily used in particular social situations or with particular content matter, e.g., literary, colloquial, slang, professional, highly formal, official. Register is different from general language, mainly in the choice of words. For example, in the register of denturists, words such as invest the case, articulator, and soft liner have a specific technical meaning. The written language registers also differ in some grammatical features. (See functional variety)

relevant
Connected to a person's situation, needs, interests, objectives, goals, or task; having importance.

report structures
Also known as indirect or reported speech. Reporting what someone else has said but using your own words. One part is the reporting clause (‘that’ clauses, "to+ infinitive" clauses," wh -word" clauses) (e.g., reported questions). (e.g., *He wanted to know if the minister was familiar with the case.)*.
(Report/ indirect structure). *(e.g., He asked: “Are you familiar with the case, madam?”)*. (Direct structure).

rigid
Strict adherence to the S+V+O+C+A patterns in the text structure, limited flexibility and manipulation of structure elements in terms of focus, theme-rheme, topic-comment, given-new. (See structure of information)

routine
Type of formulaic speech. Unanalysed units such as "I don't know" or "okay".

scanning
Reading/surveying text quickly to locate specific information, such as dates, numbers, names, etc. (See skimming)

schema (plural, schemata)
A pre-existing knowledge structure in long-term memory, a familiar normal expected pattern of things from previous experience; often a fixed, culturally dependent frame of reference for a prototypical event, situation, context. (e.g., a schematic frame for "*rummage sale*" may involve images and concepts of a school building, a church basement, community hall, hand-written posters, donations, fund-raising, second-hand clothes and household appliances in "mounds" and "heaps", children, low prices, volunteers, excitement).

script
Memorized sequence of utterances, which are fixed and predictable in a specific situation and context, e.g., greetings when people meet, "How *are you? Not bad, yourself*"?. A script is an example of formulaic speech. (Ellis 1985, p.302) Another definition of script is "a pre-existing knowledge structure for interpreting event sequences. (e.g., a visit to the dentist has a script of specific events in sequence). (Yule, 1996, p.134)

semantics
Formal, context-free meaning of words, expressions and propositions, according to the definitions and our understanding of words (naming, or referring to people, objects, states, phenomena, etc.), and according to the logic of sentences (e.g., their truth). Semantic meaning refers to relations between language and the external world. (See pragmatics)

sentence
The highest formal linguistic unit defined by the rules of grammar. (Cook, p. 158) Sometimes corresponds with "utterance" in speech. Can be simple (one clause), compound (two or more clauses joined by coordination) or complex (two or more clauses joined by subordination).

simple structures
Basic verb tenses, basic single clause sentence construction. (e.g., *It costs two dollars.* (S+V+C) She *asked him a question.)* (S+V+IO+DO)

simplification
Leaving out elements of a sentence. (e.g., *You hungry? This no good. He fix tomorrow.*). Also refers to a type of adjustment made by a speaker. Can take the form of adjusting vocabulary from difficult to

simple, or providing additional information which may aid the listener/reader's comprehension of a text or utterance.

situational context
The actual situation in which communication takes place. Situational factors such as who a learner is talking to, at what locale, with what purpose, and about what topic, influence the difficulty level of communication and the choice of linguistic forms.

skimming
Looking rapidly through the text for main ideas or to identify parts of text relevant to an established need. Concentrating mainly on the title, headings, topic sentences in the paragraphs, connectors/linking words, stressed words, and the conclusion. Skimming is a quick reading preview of text, useful either on its own, or as a pre-reading activity to ease text processing and to facilitate comprehension and interpretation while reading more in-depth.

skills (language)
The nature and structure of language skills is not well understood. Traditionally, skills have been defined as formal linguistic skills of usage (grammar, lexis, phonology/graphology) and the physical medium through which the linguistic system is manifested (print, sound). (Widdowson, 1978) From the psychological point of view, any skilled behaviour is automatic behaviour. Acquisition of such automatic skilled behaviour requires a long process of feedback and behaviour modification. Other researchers see the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing) as complex cognitive interpretative *activities* in themselves. (White, 1978) (See abilities)

SLA
Second Language Acquisition; studies devoted to discovering the ways people acquire a second language.

slow (re. reading speed)
Performed at less than normal/average speed for that situation or context. For ESL learners, slow reading range may be between 30 and 100 words per minute (wpm). Reading speed also depends on task, type of reading material and purpose for reading.

sociogram
A diagram, which represents the relations between the different characters in a story, case study, or other text (biographical, sociological, historical). Various arrows and other symbols are used to indicate feelings between characters.

speech act
An act performed by a speaker by virtue of uttering certain words, as for example, the acts of promising or threatening.

standardized text

See formatted text.

strategies
In everyday discourse, *strategy* means a plan, conscious action toward achievement of a goal. Strategies can be thought of as tools. They are used to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Strategies are attempts to remove obstacles present in communication. They can be verbal or non-verbal. Bachman and Palmer consider strategies to be metacognitive "higher order executive processes that provide management function in language use, as well as in other cognitive activities" (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, p. 70) (See communication strategies and learning strategies)

structure of information
The position of the elements in clause structure. Structure of information ordinarily follows the S+V+O+C+A sequence for a statement. In order to give special emphasis or meaning to a clause (main clause) or its parts, elements of clause structure can be put in a different sequence (moved about, manipulated). (e.g., are *fronting or cleft structures*, impersonal "it", *sentence adjunct*, linking adjuncts and *focusing* adverbs). *(e.g., Lovely face she had. What we need is mostly patience. It is patience we need. All we need is patience. Moreover, we need patience. Obviously, we need patience.).* (See *focus/focusing signals*; *thematization)*

stylistic continuum
The idea that language use (as well as interlanguage use) is variable and changing, and consists of a number of styles ranging from a "careful" style to a vernacular, casual style.

suasion
Manipulative instrumental language functions; getting things done by giving instructions, directions and orders to others, by suggesting a course of action or by advising others to do something. Persuading, negotiating, recommending, warning also belong to the category of suasion.

syllabus
The selection, sequence and grading of content in an educational program; specification of what is to be taught and in what order. A syllabus may contain all or any of the following: phonology, grammar, functions, notions, topics, themes, and tasks. (Nunan, 1988, p. 159) (See *curriculum*)

syntax
The order of words; the rules by which basic linguistic forms are connected into structures.

target domain
Where the language will be used and for what purpose.

target language
The language being learned.

task (communication, language)
A practical application and demonstration of language abilities in a structured unit of communication, complete with a particular content of language data, purpose, procedures to be carried out on the language data, objectives and defined successful completion outcomes. A practical activity/action, which results from using language. A unit of language teaching or assessment in task-based instruction.

text
1. A stretch of language (any connected series of sentences or utterances in speech or writing; letter, monologue or conversation), interpreted formally, without context. 2. Discourse; any connected series of sentences or utterances (spoken or written,), functioning in a context. (*Text* is used interchangeably with *discourse* by many teachers).

thematization
A method used to emphasize one part of the sentence. (e.g., Instead of saying: They *needed money*, we could say *It was money they needed.*). Instruments for thematization of information, depending on one's purpose in presenting theme and rheme, given and new information, and emphasis in the text are cleft structures or fronting. (See structure of information; cleft structures; preface, prefacing structures; fronting; focus/focusing signals)

top- down processing
Interpreting the meaning of discourse by getting an overall impression first. The expectations of what the discourse will be about are often activated by the context, the topic, the situation (e.g., headlines and photographs in the newspaper; the speech from the throne on television), and the framework of mental schemata of relevant related background knowledge. The next processing step is to proceed "downward" to examine more carefully the smaller linguistic elements (such as words or their parts; sounds; phrases) for a more detailed understanding.

transfer from L1
Transfer of structures, sounds, words from learner's native language (L1) into the second language because of learner's limited linguistic resources in L2. L1 transfer results in incorrect or inappropriate expression of meaning (errors) in L2 (here, in English).

transitional competence
(See interlanguage).

transparent (text)

The meaning of which is clear and easy to understand because structure and vocabulary are simple and familiar, information is explicit and factual, with direct references within the text and to a relevant, meaningful context. Free of implied meaning and cultural references/ allusions.

turn
Chance or invitation to speak at some point in a conversation; everything that one speaker says before another speaker begins to speak in an exchange. (See long turn, discourse exchange)

unformatted text
Written language in its usual form; prose (not poetry or formatted text, such as graphs, tables, forms).

utterance
1. A meaningful observable speech signal. 2. Any stretch of text (spoken or written) produced by one person as a distinct unit, separated by silence. Can be of any length - from a single sound or incomplete sentence fragments to a sequence of sentences. There is no simple correspondence between "sentence" and "utterance".

validity (face)
Does something look valid or credible on the surface (even if it is not)? Does the CLB document look like it really describes communicative proficiency in English, needed by ESL learners for settlement and integration in Canada, as it claims to do? (In the case of tests, the face validity question is: Does a test look like it measures what it claims to measure?).

validity (content)
Irrespective of its credible appearance, does the CLB document indeed describe communicative proficiency in English? (In the case of tests, the content validity question is: Does a test really measure what it claims to measure, whether it does or does not look that way?).

vernacular style
Spontaneous, casual everyday speech. *What* is being conveyed is more important than *how* it is being conveyed.

vocalization (while silently reading)
Using the voice (whisper), or moving the lips and tongue, as if one is reading aloud. Typical of slow readers who experience difficulty separating written text from its oral representation while decoding script.

word form usage
Includes use of appropriate tense (e.g. *ed, ing*) and agreement (e.g. third person "*ss*") markers, plural endings, parts of speech.

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